

Voices from

THE KOREAN WAR



PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF THOSE WHO SERVED

Douglas Rice

Voices from the Korean War

Personal Accounts of Those Who Served

Douglas Rice

iUniverse, Inc.

Bloomington

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Dedicated to:

My father—Delbert Rice:

To the men and women who shared their experiences:

And, to the men who never returned home.

*“Yea, though, I walk through the valley of
the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
for thou art with me...”*

Psalms 23:4 KJV

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~~Introduction~~

I remember as a child listening to my father as he told about his experiences during the Korean War. Because of his experiences, I became interested in military history at an early age.

The only time I wore a military uniform was in Army ROTC my freshman year at Western Kentucky University. Unfortunately, meeting twice a week at 5:00 AM in the parking lot of Diddle Arena, to practice marching and Manual of Arms, does not make me an authority on the subject. However, during the six years, I have interviewed by mail, email, phone, and in person, over one-hundred individuals who are authorities on the subject. Veterans!

One day as my father and I were working in the garden, he told me that there is a special bond between soldiers. Being a pre-teen, I had no idea of what he was talking about. But, during these past six years, spending countless hours reading handwritten letters and numerous hours on the phone, I now have a better understanding.

The silence of night was broken by shrills from bugles and whistles as the enemy came swarming down on them. How they endured the extreme cold of a record breaking winter. In the summers there was the heat and monsoon season. There was the smell of human waste, which was used as fertilizer, that hung over the lands like a morning fog in the fall. They listened to the yells for 'medic' and the screams for 'mother' by a dying comrade. In their arms, a buddy took his last breath. Most of all, they knew at any minute they might have to lay down their own life to save the life of a fellow soldier.

The Korean War has been called a police action, a conflict, a war. Unfortunately, there is one label that haunts those who so gallantly served; it is the "Forgotten War."

June 25, 2010, marked the 60th Anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War. There was no Steven Spielberg/Tom Hanks produced HBO series. There was no Ken Burns documentary on PBS. There was no official recognition in Washington, D.C..

Let it be known, these individuals fought just as bravely as any soldier in previous wars. They endured the same hardships. They bleed the same

red blood. Over 36,000 of them died in a three year period. And most of all, 8,100 American soldiers are still missing; after sixty years.

I received a letter from Nola Eckhart, wife of Alfred Eckhart, saying even though Alfred suffers from Alzheimer's; he still cannot forget the fighting and death toll on Porkchop Hill.

It is certain these men and women have not forgotten their war, and we as a free nation should not forget either.

Douglas Rice

BOOK I

June 1950 thru June 1951

~~One~~

George Weidensall

21st Infantry Regiment

24th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

In March of 1948, at the age of seventeen, I enlisted in the U.S. Army. After completing eight weeks of basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, I was informed the camp was overcrowded and I would be receiving my Advanced Infantry training at my next duty station—American controlled Korea.

While being processed upon my arrival, I was asked if I could type. Replying, “Yes,” they assigned me to the 6th Infantry Division Headquarters located in Pusan, where I was assigned the driver for the divisions chaplain. I stayed here until the American occupation ended nine months later.

From Korea, I transferred to Kokura, Japan, where I became the driver for the 24th Infantry Divisions chaplain. Eighteen months later I became the driver for the chaplain of the 21st Infantry Regiment. With only eleven days left of my service the unthinkable happened; North Korea had invaded South Korea. This prompted General MacArthur, Commander of Allied Forces in occupied Japan, to issue orders that the Army was extending the service of the men whose tenure was shortly to expire. I would not be going home; I would be going back to Korea.

Several days after the invasion, President Truman authorized MacArthur to send ground troops to Korea. Acting quickly, MacArthur instructed General Walker, Commander of the Eighth Army, to send the 24th Infantry Division—one of the four divisions stationed in Japan. So, Task Force Smith, under the command of Lt. Colonel Charles “Brad” Smith, was assembled. With Smith being the CO of 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, the task force was formed from Companies B and C, an

artillery battery, a few doctors and medics; totaling 540 men, of whom 406 were infantry.

I was issued my first M-1 rifle since basic training, which had been red-tagged by ordinance as being unserviceable, and given 120 rounds of ammo. We soon boarded C-54's and were flown to Pusan during the evening of July 1st. Arriving in Pusan we traveled by train, and trucks, to Juk-Mi Ridge—just north of Osan; we arrived during the evening on the Fourth of July.

In the early morning hours of the fifth, we would be the first U.S. troops involved in combat in the Korean War. We were met by the NKPA, which numbered in the tens-of-thousands, and thirty-three Russian built T-34 tanks. Being outnumbered, and under-equipped, Lt. Colonel Smith ordered what was left of the task force to leave. We managed to hold the pass for seven-and-a-half hours, then we began to run out of ammunition and GI's; there were about 250 of us left. It was pretty much every man for himself, and we had no maps or compasses.

I eventually met up with about sixty other men. We moved along the roads during the nights, and in the hills during daylight. Finally, after two nights and one day, we met up with elements of the 34th Infantry Regiment. Having injured my back during this time I was sent to a hospital in Japan.

When I returned to my unit, the chaplain's jeep had arrived from Japan. The chaplain had a Christian flag that he wanted to fly on the front of his jeep. However, this was at a time the NKPA was using the red crosses on helmets, and ambulances, as targets. So, refusing to fly his flag, I went to the CO requesting a transfer to a rifle company—I went to C Company. During the outbreak of the Pusan Perimeter, I crossed the Nakdong River with the second platoon, second squad, who I stayed with until early 1951.

* * * * *

In September of 1950, I fractured my ribs as I was returning to my squad from a stream carrying eight canteens full of water. As I was walking up a trail, along a cliff, I was shot at by a sniper with a burp gun. I had no choice, so I took a plunge down the side of the cliff. When I woke, I thought my insides had been shot out, but it was only the pain from my ribs. This would be my second trip to a hospital.

* * * * *

With the temperature hitting forty below zero, we were about twelve miles from the Yalu River when the Chinese entered the war. This was around Thanksgiving.

* * * * *

The regiment received a new chaplain who asked me if I would consider coming back to be his driver. I felt I had completed my “on the job training,” so I said yes.

I stayed with him until I rotated out in June of 1951.

~~Two~~

Dr. Raymond Fish

35th Infantry Regiment

25th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was born, and raised, on the family farm, which was located two miles outside Sherrodsville, Ohio. After graduating from high school in 1948, and harvesting all the crops, I decided it was time to join the U.S. Marine Corps.

After driving thirty miles to their recruiting office, I was informed by the recruiting sergeant that their quota for the next ninety days had been met. So, instead of leaving, I went across the hall and enlisted in the U.S. Army.

Upon completion of basic training and leadership school at Fort Knox, Kentucky, I headed to the west coast; there I boarded a troopship bound for Japan. I vividly remember the army band playing, “Far-away Places” as I walked up the gangplank, along with several thousands of fresh faced GI’s. A deep feeling of loneliness, and uncertainty, came over me.

After cruising the Pacific, for seventeen days, we finally arrived in Japan—it was March of 1949. Having been seasick every day of the voyage, I must have lost ten pounds. The Army of Occupation in Japan consisted of the 25th Infantry Division stationed at southern Honshu, the 24th Infantry Division on Kyushu, the 1st Cavalry Division was around the Tokyo-Yokohama area, and I’m not sure, but I believe the 7th Infantry Division was on Hokkaido.

Being assigned to an infantry regiment, I just knew my career was going to consist of close order drills, bayonet training, and the dreaded K.P. duty. However, after a morning of hot, dusty drills, our company returned to our barracks when our sergeant said he had some announcements to read. He said, “The ‘follering’ men, after chow, will turn in your rifles to the supply sergeant, grab your gear, and climb aboard that 6 x 6 truck. You’re

going to the other end of camp to be trained as medics.” As he read off the names, I heard mine; silently I gave thanks. Eventually I became a member of Medical Company, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division—little did I know that I was about to become a combat medic.

* * * * *

After North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, our division was the second division deployed to Korea.

The most terrifying experiences of the war for me were when I received my two Purple Hearts. I received one when we were in a convoy attempting to retreat, and were in danger of being overrun. The enemy had broken through our convoy and was picking off our trucks one-by-one, with deadly mortar fire. I was riding shotgun in our truck, when it stalled in a long line of vehicles. I immediately ordered everyone out of the truck and when all the guys had just gotten out, it went up in flames. We were under a lot of small arms fire, so we all ran. As we made our way across a rice paddy a bullet hit me in the right arm, which spun me around and knocked me to the ground. As I was getting up to run, I felt a stinging sensation in my left buttock. The back of my pants leg was soaked, and my boot was squishing with what I thought was blood. Finally, we made it over the top of a small hill—out of the line of fire—when we stopped to assess our situation. When I reached for my canteen, it was empty. Why? I had just filled it an hour or two earlier. I soon discovered two, neat, round holes in the bottom of it. The “blood” that had soaked my pants leg, and filled my boot, was the warm water from my canteen; the wound to my buttock was nothing more than a scratch. I can’t remember if I laughed or cried—maybe both.

This was enough to get me a few days on clean white sheets, in a hospital back in Japan. When I returned to my unit, I was glad to see all my buddies. Shortly after this, I had enough points to rotate home.

* * * * *

On August 23, 1951, just after dusk, the *General John Pope* approached the California coast with 4,290 soldiers returning home.

Thank God—I was home.

~~Three~~

Richard “Dick” Franklin

15th FA BN

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

Having been born in Tampa, Florida, my family moved to Miami when I was young. It was here that I enlisted in the U.S. Army in February of 1950.

During the first part of June, I finished my basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky. After which time, I was sent to Seattle to wait for overseas deployment. Instead, we were all sent to Fort Lewis, Washington to fill vacant spots in the 2nd Infantry Division. A school classmate, who I joined with, was sent to the 9th Infantry Regiment and I went to B Battery of the 15th FA BN.

Arriving in Korea on the last day of July, we were sent directly to the front line. Those days on the Nakdong were pure hell.

After the successful landing at Inchon, and the liberation of Seoul, we headed north. It was November and we were located in the North Korean town of Kunu-ri when the Chinese entered the war. The 2nd Infantry Division held the line while outfits on our left flank were able to get out. With the exception of us, and the 23rd Infantry Regiment, the rest of the division headed down a road only to run into the damnest roadblock ever. The Chinese had apparently broken through the ROK, who were on our right flank, and set up an ambush that was ten miles long. Our losses, both in men and equipment, were terrible. The 15th FA got out with most of its men, but lost all its guns.

* * * * *

In early February of 1951, we stopped the Chinese at a town called Wonju. The 15th FA, the 1st Battalion of the 38th Infantry Regiment, a battery of 155 howitzers, some anti-aircraft units, and tanks—a total of

1,800 men—were sent up to support the ROK in their attack. We had set up for fire support, and sometime after dark the Chinese hit the ROK hard. The ROK soon collapsed and the Chinese came though getting some distance south of us. We tried to fight our way out, but they had the road well covered with automatic weapons and mortars. I was firing at the hills on both sides of the road as I began walking out. Soon I became separated from the rest of the unit, so I continued on alone.

At one point I was trading fire with a Chinese when an officer came running towards me yelling, “Don’t shoot. Those are our guys up there.” About that time a “Chink” fired a burst from his burp gun and with slugs hitting all around him, he took off running up the road screaming, “They are shooting at me.” It was funny later, but not at that moment.

I kept going all night and before daylight, I caught a slug that had glanced off the frozen road. It struck me in the middle of my forehead, knocking me to the ground. I don’t know how long I laid there, but it was getting light when I came to. After I was able to get to my feet, I continued moving down the road until I came across some soldiers under a bombed out bridge. We soon decided to head for a road that was on the opposite side of an open field. A sergeant, who I didn’t know, told me to cover them until they reached the road, then they would cover me. I fired until I ran out of ammo, but I noticed they weren’t firing to cover for me. As I looked around I saw them all running down the road, because they were being fired at from another hill.

I quickly jumped to my feet and ran to the road. There lying in ditch were roughly ten trucks that had been shot up. I crawled underneath one of them to get out of sight, and to get warm. Around noon, a flight of jets came soaring across the sky strafing the hill where we had been receiving fire. However, before they could get their fingers off the triggers, they were strafing the trucks—talk about something getting your attention.

The Chinese never came down to the trucks, so after dark I moved up into the hills. Wandering lost, sometime in the night, I came across a house set apart from a small village. Cautiously entering the house, I came upon four GI’s that were asleep. I had gone two days and nights without sleep, or food, so I laid down with them. Suddenly, I was rudely awakened by a “Chink” with a burp gun. After rounding us all up, we were put in a small compartment where the home owners kept their bedding. They must have

been a rear echelon unit, because they didn't know what to do with us. All day long our planes worked over the village and we were afraid they would eventually hit us, but they didn't.

We were kept there for several days with only one ball of rice, which was about the size of a softball, for us and two ROK soldiers they had captured earlier. I believe it was the second night when they took us outside, where they pointed south and told us to go. Having beaten all of us, and my head bleeding all down my front, they probably thought we would die anyway. However, they kept the two ROK soldiers.

Having walked all night, the following morning we laid under a large rock on a ridge line. After dark we started walking again, and at one point we were paralleling the road when we heard the patter of tennis shoes on the frozen road. Quickly, we laid behind a bank along a rice paddy and watched what looked to be a battalion of Chinese trotting up the road. When they passed, we crossed a frozen river and found a burned out house just before daylight. We laid up there for the night. After daybreak, we looked out across a rice paddy and noticed a bombed out bridge. Under the bridge, fixing rice was an entire company of Chinese. We must have walked within a hundred yards of them.

Weak, and hungry, we decided it was time to move again. It started to snow. As we crossed over a hill in front of us we picked up the road into the valley. As we were walking along the road, the snow stopped. We looked to our left, and noticed up the hill about fifty yards were a bunch of Chinese digging in; they just stopped and watched as we walked by.

About a half-mile down the road we saw a welcomed sight—a unit of the 187th Airborne. We were evacuated to a Swedish Red Cross hospital back in Pusan and there to the 361st Army Hospital in Tokyo.

* * * * *

Eventually, I was sent back home and then to Camp Gordon, Georgia. Eight months later I volunteered to go back. I would spend another year in Korea with a self-propelled 105 unit.

~~*Four*~~

Joseph Marlett

27th Infantry Regiment

25th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

With my mother signing for me, I enlisted in the U.S. Army on February 17, 1948—ten days after my seventeenth birthday.

My unit, B Company, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, landed at the port of Pusan, South Korea on July 10, 1950. Our hasty deployment from Japan to South Korea, on a World War II type, rusty Japanese transport ship, took about forty-eight hours. We fought our first daylong battle against the NKPA on the 24th of July.

In the first few weeks of combat, three U.S. infantry divisions—the 24th, 25th, and the 1st Cavalry—previously stationed in Japan were fighting eight well trained North Korean divisions. We were fighting delaying actions, and giving up ground, while more units were arriving in Pusan.

In our zone of western South Korea, the 25th and 1st Cavalry were mainly blocking the main roads to Pusan. As we tried to slow the advancement of the well disciplined NKPA, we had no solid line of defense. As the enemy continued their southward trek, the 27th Regiment was attacked and overrun almost on a daily basis—especially during July and August. During this period, my platoon had been reduced in strength from forty-eight to fourteen; they had been killed or wounded.

By the middle of August, I believe a verbal order from our regimental commander, Lt. Colonel John Michaelis, was issued for all companies to secretly check every man's rifle to see if it had been fired, and if not—why. Immediately following the next enemy attack, we platoon leaders conducted the secret check; I found three men that had not fired a shot. When asked why, they replied that due to their religious beliefs they could

not kill another human being. These men had trained with us for two years in Japan; these men were not cowards.

We reprimanded them, threatened them with court-martial, etc., and waited until the next inspection. During the second inspection, it was found that the same three men had fired all their ammunition. When I asked them if they had wounded or killed an enemy soldier, they replied, "No. We missed on purpose." Since these were honorable soldiers, and truthful, one of them was assigned as our supply truck driver and the other two were assigned as ammo bearers for our 60mm mortar section; no punishment was administered. Our other three platoons reported similar results. We interviewed all incoming replacements before assigning them to a squad.

By the end of September, the U.S. led Eighth Army and its allies had defeated the NKPA and restored South Korea. The men began to wonder when the ships were coming to take us home for Christmas; it was not to be. Complying with orders from MacArthur, we crossed the 38th parallel with the mission of unifying all of Korea under the government of South Korea's Syngman Rhee.

We crossed the 38th parallel in early October and marched approximately 125 miles north with little or no enemy resistance. By the end of the month, many of the units of the Eighth Army were north of the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. The 27th had reached an area north of the Kuryong River near the North Korean town of Yongbyon.

We advanced farther northwest when we heard rumors that other units were engaged in heavy combat. While other units had reached the Manchurian border, we were about thirty-five miles from the Yalu River.

Unbeknownst to our intelligence, China's Chairman Mao Zedong and his generals had already decided to intervene and help North Korea. They had already deployed 170,000 troops, south of the border, in the mountains of North Korea, with another 120,000 in reserve.

Around the middle of November, the Chinese Peoples Army (volunteers) struck us with a vengeance and drove the Eighth Army back about 150 miles; and eventually back into South Korea. By this time the weather had turned bitterly cold with the wind-chill reaching forty-to-fifty degrees below zero.

When we left Japan, in July, we were issued a wool olive drab Army overcoat, but we discarded them because they were too heavy and bulky to fight in. By Thanksgiving we had been issued the Army trench coat with removable liner; they were a great improvement. We were also issued goose down winter, or arctic, sleeping bags. They were the very best—I still have one. After another unit was bayoneted to death while trying to unzip their sleeping bags, we removed all our zippers.

Our long retreat ended about thirty miles south of Seoul around the 15th of January, 1951. American Army units decided to defend the South Korean capital and slow the enemy at the Han River, which was about 200 yards wide and frozen over.

Rumors were running rampant: the 8th Cavalry Regiment being almost annihilated at Unsan, North Korea: the 2nd Infantry Division had been caught in a huge Chinese ambush: the First Marine Division were fighting for their lives on the east coast near the city of Hungnam, North Korea. These turned out, not to be rumors. Our 27th Infantry Regiment had not yet been engaged by the CCF.

When General Walton Walker, commander of the Eighth Army, ordered a hasty withdrawal, our regiment started marching south in the snow—fighting our first battle with the “Chinks” in the western outskirts of Seoul. This four hour battle was by no means our toughest battle, but our first with the CCF. Company B—my company—was acting alone when what appeared to have been a Chinese battalion attacked us. Our 1st Battalion had already split up and each company was defending a possible enemy approach into the city.

In September of 1950, when Seoul had been captured by American troops, all the bridges spanning the 200 yard wide Han River had been destroyed. None of these had been repaired or rebuilt. So, the 65th Engineer BN had to construct a pontoon bridge across the Han in order for our men and vehicles to cross to the south. After everyone and all equipment had crossed, the engineers were to salvage the bridge. Once the pontoon had been removed, the Chinese would be on the north side while we wore out leather going south.

Our 3rd Battalion set up a perimeter just north of the pontoon bridge to provide safe passage for all the other units crossing the river. Although the

river was frozen enough for men to walk across, it was unsafe for heavy equipment.

Around midnight on January 3, 1951, Company B was deployed in a defensive line along the western berm of a railroad. By 0400 hours we had dug in and our CO, Captain Gordon Jung, placed four tanks on the rear slope of the railroad, and one blocking the underpass. We were ready to meet the enemy—for the first time.

Every man was apprehensive about facing the Chinese; we had long ago made a pact to die fighting instead of surrendering. Sometimes surrendering to the NKPA was worse than dying. One of my best friends was found tied to a tree, with commo wire, and had about thirty bayonet puncture wounds to his body. We believed the Chinese would treat us the same way. About six inches of snow had covered the ground, and was still falling. Roughly seventy-five yards behind us was a row of houses with what appeared to be a harvested sweet potato field between us and the houses.

At 0730 on the fourth, about two-hundred Korean refugees were seen walking down the road towards us, some three-hundred yards away. As they drew nearer, we could see women carrying children, old men carrying their belongings on A-frame packs, old women pushing hand carts, and ox carts loaded with bundles, and a few dogs. Captain Jung ordered our second platoon leader not to allow them to come any closer than one-hundred yards to our position—by firing his machine gun over their heads. The captain wanted to prevent any civilians from getting caught in the crossfire.

Once the machine gun opened fire, the refugees panicked. Some just milled around for a few moments, but finally the majority of them ran back in the direction they came from. Lo and behold, at the sound of our gunfire a nice military formation developed on each side of the road; men threw off what appeared to be white ponchos, took cover behind some burial mounds, and opened fire on us. There were about thirty soldiers firing at us with rifles only and we suspected they must have been an advance guard of the Chinese Army.

An hour later, roughly forty Chinese soldiers joined the small arms fire with their comrades. We held off this group, inflicting heavy casualties on

them. We could see their medics, or other soldiers, carrying their wounded to the rear. The Chinese employed women soldiers as medics or laborers.

At 0900 we were receiving reports that long lines of enemy soldiers had been spotted running across the railroad tracks some three-hundred yards away. They were headed for the row of houses behind us. As they disappeared into the houses, they soon started firing from windows, and doorways, at our rear. Captain Jung called our regimental commander, Col. Michaelis, who was located on the south side of the river. He requested permission for us to withdraw; permission was denied. The colonel, who was an experienced World War II veteran and a fine leader, informed the captain there were still a lot of soldiers, and equipment, that had yet to cross the pontoon. We had to hold the enemy a bit longer.

Captain Jung, at 1030, would again call the colonel asking for permission to fight our way out of the tightening circle of the enemy. He went on to inform the colonel that he feared losing many of his men, and that the enemy strength was increasing every minute. Again permission was denied. We were running low on ammo, and some of the men began to think that our senior commanders were sacrificing us for the benefit of the larger units coming south. As a nineteen-year-old first lieutenant, from Warm Springs, Arkansas, I thought this may be my last day on earth.

As we continued to hold our line along the railroad berm, Captain Jung sent a runner to tell all his platoon leaders to meet with him at his CP, which was located behind a hut with a mud thatched roof. Since I was located about seventy-five yards from his CP, I was the first to arrive. When I turned the corner of the hut, he was down on one knee—praying. Seeing me, he stood up. By this time the other officers were beginning to arrive.

Here he informed us of what the plan would be when the word for us to breakout would come. The four tanks would lead slightly ahead of the company, closely followed by each platoon—in line. As we moved out we were to assault the line of houses, turn right on the street that ran behind the houses, and quickly get out of range of the enemies small arms fire. We were to put our dead and wounded on the tanks; the wounded were to ride while holding the dead.

Finally, at 1145, word came to breakout. In the meantime, the Chinese had raised a flag on a makeshift flagpole, on one of the buildings about one-

hundred yards behind us. The captain asked one of the tank commanders if he could shoot the flag down. The sergeant replied, “Yes, sir!” He had his gunner zero in on the flagpole—BOOM! The first round missed. However, not only did the second round break the flagpole, but also put a huge gaping hole in the buildings roof.

It was a do-or-die situation as B Company attacked across the open sweet potato field, firing into the windows and doorways of the houses. About half-way across the field, one of my men fell wounded face down in the snow. My sergeant, M/Sgt. Jerome Sudut, and I rushed to his aid. As we were carrying him to one of the tanks, I looked behind us and saw roughly forty Chinese standing on the railroad firing at us. The “Chinks” had seen us leaving.

Reaching the street behind the houses, we hurried east, in two columns. We then came to a larger street, turned right, passed through the 3rd Battalions perimeter, and finally crossed the pontoon bridge. What a scary day!

Unfortunately, B Company had to leave seven men behind—probably killed in action. Three of our KIA’s were KATUSA or ROK soldiers assigned to our company. During the breakout, one ROK was killed and six wounded, which were put on the tanks. We were lucky to have escaped with such low casualties, but discipline, good leadership, and the strong will to survive really paid off.

Having been slightly wounded by enemy mortar shrapnel, treated for frostbite on my left big toe, and treated for malaria—twice, I rotated home on the 5th of May, 1951.

~~*Five*~~

Harold Selley

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

Born on November 16, 1928, in Benkelman, Nebraska, I was one of three children born to Clarence and Maurine Selley. I graduated from Boulder High School, in Boulder, Colorado, in 1946.

Having been notified by the draft board that I was up for induction, as a draftee, I enlisted in the U.S. Army on December 22, 1948. By joining I figured I would have a broader range of schooling than if I had been drafted.

I traveled, by train, to Fort Ord, California, where I took my basic training. After completing basic, I expressed an interest in the medical field; and I also scored well on a battery of tests I was given a month leave, after which time I was to report to my new assignment—medical school.

Upon arriving at Fort Sam Houston, I was quickly processed to a barrack assignment for my eight weeks of training. Here we learned how to apply dressings to wounds, put casts on fractures, the use of Army field kits for combat injuries, assist doctors in surgery, sterilization techniques, give shots, and give physical exams. We were trained to be assigned to an Army hospital, or to a front line aid station.

After my training, I was sent to the 7th Cavalry Regiment Medical Company in Tokyo, Japan. I arrived in June of 1949. Shortly after my arrival, I went with the regiment for two months of training to a camp located at the base of Mt. Fuji. Four months later I went to Osaka for four months of schooling, after which time I returned to the medical company.

Our company had no idea there was trouble brewing in Korea. When we heard that we would be going to assist UN troops in Korea, we thought we would be returning to Tokyo in a couple of weeks. We were to leave in a

hurry, so we had no time to contact our families back home. All leaves were cancelled, and men were filling out their \$10,000 life insurance papers.

We boarded two ships, the *USS Ainsworth* and the ship I was assigned, the *USS Shanks*. The 7th made a beach landing at Pohong-Dong, South Korea on July 18, 1950—we met no resistance. Later that day, as we marched to the train track, we saw evidence that people had been killed. The train we commandeered was riddled with bullet holes. We knew then we were in a war!

Every medic carried a weapon, mostly carbines, which were smaller and lighter than the M-1. Some even carried a .45 pistol; I carried both. We medics often had to use our weapons. Our aid stations were normally set up in a blackened-out school building, a tent, or some other structure, which was illuminated during the night by a Coleman lantern.

I was the main person responsible for seeing that the proper tag was placed on each casualty. The tag, which contained a brief explanation of the wound, was for identification and a record for the regiment. Due to treating casualties by the hundreds, we became proficient in our jobs. We performed amputations, treated spinal injuries, set broken bones, removed shrapnel, and most of all—treated men for shock. Many died before we could evacuate them; dead and wounded were all around us—daily. During heavy fighting, we often went without sleep. Once I went four days without sleep, continuously attending to the wounded.

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While we were in the Pusan Perimeter, we saw a constant flow of casualties. We, the medical company, moved in and around Taegu during this time. During these three months there was little or no rest. We lost a lot of medics; it was a wonder anyone survived this fighting. However, we finally were able to breakout and head north to Osan-ni.

Along the Naktong River was an area of some of the fiercest fighting during the war. The fighting lasted for days, and positions shifted numerous times. We, the Collecting Station, were in the midst of all the fighting. Wounded soldiers could not be evacuated, so we had to perform more medical aid on site than normal. We performed minor surgical procedures

and amputations. The wounded came pouring in and many died because we could not evacuate them.

Before the 7th crossed the Nakdong, the bridge crossing it had been destroyed. As the men tried to get to the other side, the North Koreans opened fire on them, inflicting many casualties. Many of the wounded drowned as they attempted to cross the river; we felt helpless in trying to go to their aid.

As we trekked northward, we went through the towns of Osan-ni and Seoul. After breaking through enemy lines, and crossing the 38th parallel, we headed straight for the capital of North Korea—Pyongyang. From here we went to Chinampo, which was on the west coast. We continued north until we were within fifteen miles of the Yalu River. One of the towns we passed through was Sinchang-ni.

One of the worse battles that I witnessed occurred in Sinchang-ni beginning on the 29th of November, and lasted for four days. The ROK was on our right and left flanks. When the Chinese attacked, the ROK left without informing anyone. The Chinese came at us from all sides, and outnumbered us ten-to-one. Casualties were extremely heavy, and we worked all day and night trying to save lives. All three battalion aid stations were overrun by the Chinese and most of the medics were killed or captured. Our station was the only one left in operation for the entire regiment.

There were eight of us medics, along with two doctors. Our aid station was set up in a one-room building. One of the doctors stayed outside, in the dark, to give aid to those who couldn't come inside. By the time the wounded arrived, they were almost dead. As a result, most of my cases died before I could finish any first aid procedures.

Finally, after four days, I was able to take a break. I went outside with one of the doctors, where we saw row after row of dead that had been brought to the aid station. It was a sobering experience; we medics felt helpless.

When we heard that the ROK had left without telling anyone, we became very angry. It was very emotional when we were told which medics had been killed or wounded—they were our friends.

It was amazing what our medical team could do when we lacked supplies; we had to be creative. Our doctors constantly had to come up with alternate procedures. We depended on the doctors for their expertise, but us medics became good at diagnosing illnesses such as, pneumonia, malaria, and encephalitis. Several times I found myself making decisions when a doctor was unavailable—we had to! Each of us understood the gravity of the situation—no one wanted any soldier to die.

* * * * *

The night before I was to rotate home we had moved to a new location, and a friend and I were to dig a foxhole; instead, I slept on the ground. Later that night we were strafed by enemy aircraft—we quickly dug that foxhole. I was afraid that I wasn't going to make it home. However, during the last of June 1951, I boarded the *Marine Lynx*—headed stateside.

After we docked in Seattle, I walked down the gangplank, stooped down, and kissed the ground—I was back in the U.S.A.

I was discharged from the Army on December 21, 1951.[\[1\]](#)

~~Six~~

George Porter

23rd Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was born in Kentucky on February 18, 1933. One weekend I went to see a movie at the local cinema, and the news reel said, "Join the Army and see the world." The next morning I went to the post office to talk to the recruiting officer. I told him I was seventeen and wanted to join, but I was actually sixteen years old. He informed me that I needed to bring in my birth certificate, to verify that I was seventeen. When I asked my mother for it, she told me that it had been lost in the 1937 flood. The recruiter then explained to me that my mother would have to go to the courthouse and sign a notarized document stating that I was seventeen. She did. On August 29, 1949 I was sworn into the U.S. Army. Two days later I arrived at Fort Knox, Kentucky to begin my basic training.

On the 22nd of December, after three-and-a-half months of training, I received orders to report to A Battery, 37th FA, 2nd Infantry Division, in Fort Lewis, Washington on January 2, 1950. Here I went through more training in driving a two-and-a-half ton truck, pulling a 105 Howitzer; along with firing the Howitzer, and laying phone wire. This lasted until July, when the 2nd Infantry Division was put on alert and shipped to Korea.

On the 5th of August, we arrived in Pusan, Korea. Three days later we were firing support missions for the infantry, until we were ordered to withdraw south of the Naktong River. The roads were jammed with refugees, making it hard to withdraw. Finally, we made it across the river and were ordered to set up and fire support for the withdrawing infantry. Word was soon passed all along the perimeter that the infantry was catching hell—especially at night.

Orders came down in late August that all rear echelon outfits were to send all available men they could spare, to the front line. Eleven of us were

given an M-1 and sent to the front. I was assigned to Company B, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division.

The next day I had my first experience of being in a barrage of artillery and mortar fire; I was so scared, I pissed in my pants and wanted to get out of there. The guy in the foxhole with me was scared too. He told me when the barrages stopped all hell would break loose. He continued by telling me that flares would be shot into the air, but for me not to look at them. Once this happened he told me to pull the pin from a hand grenade and be ready to throw it, and to shoot at anything I saw in front of us.

He was right. As soon as the barrages stopped, we heard them blowing their whistles and screaming “banzai.” Our booby-traps started going off and you could see movement in front us, firing all along the perimeter. You could hear yells for medics up and down the line. This went on until daylight began to break—then it was quiet. You still heard the calls for medics, and saw bodies lying all around.

The 30th and 31st of August was more of the same. During the day we would stack up on ammo, and grenades, in preparation for the night. Our wounded, and dead, were taken care of and sent back to Pusan. The third platoon had two wounded and one killed, who was the BAR man. I was assigned to take his place. My job was to cover the machine gunner when he yelled “reloading.” I covered him until he was able to start firing again.

Our platoon sergeant had us move to another position to give support to an area that was getting hit pretty hard. Moving out in the open was scary as hell. Having just spent three days in combat—at the age of seventeen—I soon learned that what they put us through at Fort Knox was going to work.

On the 1st of September, orders came down from General’s MacArthur and Walker that we were not to give up one-inch of territory—we were to hold regardless of cost. We began to fix our foxholes, and gather all the ammo and grenade we could get. Supplies, along with needed replacements, were coming from Pusan. However, with the roads being jammed they were having trouble getting through. Plus, the North Koreans were posing as refugees and hitting the supply convoys at night.

The nights were miserable with mosquitoes and the smell of the dead.

On the night of September 4th, they hit us hard with our company getting overrun at the left flank. My foxhole buddy and I were moved over

to help the left flank, and our first platoon was in hand-to-hand combat with the North Koreans that had broken through our lines. Again, as daylight approached the fighting began to lighten up. Even though the first platoon had taken casualties, which were being taken care of, they inflicted more casualties on the enemy. As bodies littered the area, they had some Korean civilians to come and remove the dead that the North Koreans had left behind.

Around mid-morning on the fifth, we noticed the North Koreans removing their dead from the river banks. We began to shoot at them, but were told to stop so we wouldn't waste our ammunition.

It was around midnight on the sixth and we had been under an hour long artillery barrage when we heard our booby-traps rattle. These were C-ration cans, with rocks in them, attached to barbed wire that had been stretched out in front of our position. Suddenly, flares began to explode and we could see the enemy everywhere in front of our position. After firing for over two hours, they began to infiltrate our positions. It now came down to hand-to-hand combat; you grabbed anything you could to fight with. Your basic training only helps so much; the rest is up to you. The company lost two men that night. And again the North Koreans paid a heavier price.

Later that evening we received word that a supply convoy had arrived at the assembly area, so a detail was formed to go bring back the supplies. My foxhole buddy and I were chosen to go along to provide support in case they were attacked. When we arrived they already had some Koreans, with their A-frame packs, loaded with supplies. As we started back, it began to rain hard, which made our return trip up the mountain slow. We finally made it back and the supplies were unloaded, and handed out.

Things were quiet between the seventh and ninth and word was going around that MacArthur was going to land the Marines at Inchon—this got everyone's spirits up. I thought I would finally get back to A Battery, and get off the front line—at least that is what I had hoped for.

At noon on September 12th, we went to eat chow and the first guys that went down came back with C-rations—the cook tent was gone. This made us think the company would be moving to another location, which didn't happen.

On the thirteenth, around 3:00 PM, planes started hitting the hill across the river from us with napalm; after they left, the artillery started. The following morning, around 9:00 AM, our platoon was called together and informed that the Marines would start their amphibious landing—at Inchon—at 6:00 AM on the morning of the fifteenth. If they were successful, we were to start our counterattack. Company B was given the mission to take a hill that was located a mile-and-a-half in front of the river, which we were to hold until we were relieved. At 8:00 AM on the sixteenth, we crossed the river in DUCKS.

With light casualties, we took the hill around 2:00 PM. On the hill we found several dead GI's that had their hands tied behind their backs. That day, a lot of us men—from Company B—swore we would never be taken alive. Six days later we were relieved by the ROK.

Around 2:00 AM, on the morning of the twenty-second, the company took on light gunfire on our front. Roughly an hour-and-a-half later, our right flank began to take on heavy fire. They said they could hold, but they up and ran off leaving our right flank wide open. This is where the North Koreans hit the company. Our company commander was killed and I took a bullet in my left leg. We weren't able to hold, and were ordered to withdraw. My foxhole buddy, along with another soldier, helped me down the hill where a medic took care of my leg. I was then placed in an ambulance and taken to a hospital in Pusan.

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On October 7th, I was cleared to return to duty. I reported to the assembly area where I was given new clothes; two pair of fatigue pants and shirts, two pair of socks, new boots, an M-1 rifle, two grenades, one bandoleer of ammo, a field belt, a canteen, and a first-aid kit.

At 8:00 AM on the eighth, a convoy left Pusan returning forty-three men to their units. It was a slow trip, because the road was jammed with refugees; they were everywhere you looked. Women were carrying babies on their backs, and buckets on their heads—they looked like walking dead. After we crossed the Nakdong, we could see where the planes, and artillery, had done a job on the villages, as well as what the North Koreans had done. As we passed through towns you could see burnt bodies from the napalm.

And in the fields you could see the dead livestock. Then there was the horrible smell.

Finally, after an all day miserable truck ride, we reached the assembly area where we were able to get a hot meal. I was told that Baker Company was located on a hill, which was hard to climb with my leg still hurting. However, the climb helped work out the soreness. When I reached our company, I was given my BAR back along with my foxhole buddy. He told me the Marines were ahead of us and that our division was getting a few days rest. During this time our new replacements were going on patrols to learn what to do, plus help get them in shape for climbing the hills of Korea.

Orders came down for Baker Company to move to a position on a hill that overlooked Seoul. The Marines had already gone through the city and we were to mop up. However, the orders were changed and we were to stay in our position—the ROK got the job.

After ten days, we moved to a new assembly area where we received supplies and were told we were going on the attack. Other countries had sent troops to Korea, who were now on the front line, and we were all going on the offensive. The North Koreans were in full retreat and we were going to hit them hard, and end the war. Our objective was to take a certain town in North Korea, and set up a perimeter.

The following afternoon, around 2:00 PM, with the help of tanks and twin-40's, we took our objective and set up a roadblock. Patrols were sent out daily, and one of them found fifty mutilated bodies. Our interpreter couldn't get any of the local civilians to tell us who did this. We stayed here until the 20th of November when we were relieved by a ROK unit. We went to an assembly area where we were fed a Thanksgiving Dinner, and outfitted for another mission. While here we were not only fed hot meals, but we were able to take hot showers. And being on the front-line since the 21st of October, we definitely were in need of them.

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Orders came down that in any day we would be moving north, through the 9th Infantry Regiment, to attack. As we were to push to the Yalu River, rumor had it that MacArthur said we would be home by Christmas.

After all three battalions had finished their Thanksgiving Dinner; we were taken by trucks to a large assembly area. To our right, about two-thousand yards, was a high mountain. Dug in ahead of us was the 9th Infantry Regiment. Our platoon sergeant told us to gather our gear, then he took us to our position; he placed two men between the tanks, which we told him was a bad idea. He said since we would be jumping off at 0600 the following morning, there was no need for us to dig foxholes.

Around 2300 hours we began to hear small arms fire to our front, then flares began to go off and the firing became heavier. Quickly our platoon sergeant came over and told everyone to grab everything and to take up positions facing the river. As soon as we and the tanks were in position, flares began to light up the sky and we could see the area was crawling with Chinese. We opened up on them along with our tanks and twin-40's—it was like a turkey shoot. This continued until daylight, and then it got deathly quiet. G.W. and I got out our trench tools and began digging ourselves a foxhole. We were about half done when we came under a barrage of artillery and mortar fire. When there was a lull in the shelling, we started throwing dirt like crazy—and we weren't the only ones.

When the Chinese hit us, they hit every outfit along the front. Everyone was confused because no one knew where they came from. After surveying the damage, we had lost the high ground to our right; the Chinese were now looking down our throats. A field artillery unit had been caught off guard and had to flee, leaving all their howitzers behind; every outfit was trying to regroup. Around 0800 hours, we were told we would be attacking up the valley—to open up the road—so the 9th Infantry Regiment could withdraw. The Chinese had the road blocked, and it was their only way out.

Every man—that could use a weapon—from every unit was being send forward, and with tanks and twin-40's for support, we attacked. After five hours of hard fighting, we were able to open up the road and the 9th began to withdraw through our lines. It was getting late in the afternoon, and it was bitterly cold; no one had winter clothes. Orders came for us to pull back; however, stragglers were still coming through.

Baker Company was told to swing around to our right and to try to retake the hill that had been lost earlier. The 9th would be attacking from

the other side. This hill was later known as the Chinaman Hat. Our attack failed, causing us to withdraw back inside the perimeter.

The night of November 27th was quiet and bitterly cold. Men were beginning to get frost bitten feet, and we were beat from having very little sleep. Our sergeant told us to send one man from each foxhole to go bring back anything they could find to eat, plus ammo. Word had it that we might be pulling out and we would have to travel by foot. G.W. came back with a five pound can of Spam, bread, and all the can heat, ammo and C-rations he could carry.

On the twenty-eighth, under the cover of darkness, a convoy of wounded, two companies, and tanks, started out through the pass. We had received orders to destroy everything that couldn't be moved. After setting fires, and blowing up all our equipment, we moved out. Around 2300 hours the roadblock that the convoy had passed through an hour earlier came under attack and was taking on heavy fire. The outfit responsible for blocking the road was unable to keep it open, so they began to withdraw. The ROK came under fire around 0200, and they fled into the hills leaving our flank wide open. The 2nd BN was quickly moved into a blocking position in the vicinity of Won-ni.

The 2nd Division served as rear guard for the rest of the Eighth Army, as they proceeded through the pass. We were to hold, and give the convoy at least a ten hour head start—if possible. When darkness began to set in, we were to start our withdrawal. It was close to 0500 hours on the thirtieth when we caught up with the rear of the convoy, for they were having trouble keeping it moving. We were there for over twelve hours before the convoy finally started moving again; the division had to dig in for the night.

The company dug in on a hill, and set booby-traps to our front. It wasn't long before the booby-traps started going off, then here they came—in white uniforms to blend in with the snow. They broke through our lines and we were soon engaged in hand-to-hand combat; we were holding as daylight approached. Our wounded and dead, were loaded onto a two-and-a-half ton truck, until it was full, then sent out through the pass.

I was shaking so bad from the cold, I could hardly hold my cup to get a sip of coffee. My feet hurt like hell because of the cold—even wearing two

pairs of socks didn't help. Plus, we had cut up our blankets and wrapped them around our boots; we did anything we could to keep warm.

On the 1st of December, around 0300 hours, we came to a roadblock that had been set up by UN forces. We immediately took up positions on some high ground on both sides of the road. We were told to hold until we received orders to withdraw. Having made our way up a hill, we tried to dig in but the ground was frozen. It was about an hour later when orders came to withdraw. As we were coming down the hill, the roadblock came under fire and men began to run everywhere; firing as they ran.

G.W. and I came across two GI's that were helping their wounded buddy, so we quickly helped them to get him down to the road. When daylight approached, the attack eased up. Orders came down for us to keep moving, as air support was on the way. It was another six or seven miles to the end of the pass. Here a defensive line had been set up and we were to join it.

We had become separated from our company and we tried to locate it, but no one knew where it was. The wounded GI that we had stopped to help died. He was placed with the other dead. The wounded, and those with frostbitten feet, were loaded onto trucks to be moved out first.

G.W. and I were able to get some coffee, and a sandwich to eat; then we got some ammo and hand grenades. We were instructed to find a place anywhere along the line where we could provide fire support. After hours of digging, we finally finished our foxhole. G.W. went to see if he could find some can-of-heat, which he did along with some blankets. We used the blankets to sit on in our foxhole. We lit the can-of-heat and took our boots off to warm our feet, and checked them for frostbite.

We were told that when morning came a truck would be taking us to an assembly area. All day long stragglers were coming in, and GI's were running out to help them. Medics were going up and down the line, asking if everyone was alright. G.W. went around asking about our company, when he met other guys like us—separated from their company. Around 1500 hours, word came down the line for one man from each foxhole to go eat, and then they were to come back so the other man could eat. After we had eaten, G.W. went back out again to find our company. When he returned, he

said the company was scattered all up and down the line. We were to stay put until morning, then we would all join up—after breakfast—at the road.

Here we joined up with what was left of Baker Company; it was extremely cold and due to frostbite, some men could barely walk. Under the cover of air support, we moved to the next defensive line. The Chinese were right behind us, but we made it to the line.

Our outfit continued on, setting up another defensive line further down the road. Then the next day lines began leapfrogging through each other. This continued until we reached a town where we set up a perimeter. The weather was miserable—snowing all through the night. We held the Chinese back until the 3rd of December, then we withdrew to the south.

A lot of good men from all units across Korea were lost. Baker Company itself was in bad shape; we were down to about half a company. Chinaman's Hat was a battle that no man who was there can ever forget—I can't. Had it not been for the U.S. Air Force, the 2nd Infantry Division would have been annihilated. We owe those guys our thanks.

Somehow intelligence screwed up—they should have known the Chinese were in North Korea.

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We continued to use this leap-frog maneuver as we withdrew until mid-December, when the French Battalion moved up to help strengthen up the 23rd Infantry Regiment. After a fierce fire fight, the Chinese seemed to have eased up to the point we were able to build fires to get warm. However, there were always men manning foxholes to keep watch.

Orders came down for Baker Company, and the French Battalion, to take a town that was said to have four to five hundred North Koreans there. After a few hours, the North Koreans withdrew to the hills.

Again, with the help of tanks and twin-40's, we set up another roadblock. The 37th FA was brought up to give us fire support, if we needed it. There were small attacks during the morning hours, but they were always beaten back. It seemed the Chinese had stopped their attacks, because after every fire fight we only found dead North Koreans.

It was near the end of December, when our company was given another mission; take another town and set up a roadblock. Along with the French, tanks, twin-40's, artillery, and planes, we started our mission. We headed down the road with two platoons on each side. As we neared the town, we saw that a roadblock had already been set up. We radioed battalion headquarters to see if there were any friendly forces in the town. After waiting for two hours, the tanks started moving up the road towards the roadblock. As they approached, they came under fire; planes were called in to hit the roadblock. When they hit, we attacked and took the town—what was left of it. And what we found would have made anyone sick! Civilian women and children, butchered; elderly men and women had been shot. This had all been done—to their own people—by North Korean soldiers.

Here we set up a roadblock; the tanks and twin-40's were placed in the middle, with our company on one side and the French on the other side. The next morning more outfits moved in, and surrounded the town. Our medics helped the local civilians the best they could. Everyone had settled in for a counterattack, but there was only a small fire fight involving one of the companies that was located on a hill.

There would be no Christmas Dinner for Baker Company, or any other company that was in the hills surrounding the town. Having been told we would be home before Christmas, the men were not in a very good mood; we were still fighting, and freezing our asses off.

The 2nd Infantry Division was relieved by the ROK on the 28th of December, and we moved to an assembly area near Seoul. A lot of us missed reveille the following morning, because we had gone into town to party. They almost put the whole company on report, but we didn't care. After being on the front line for six months, us men from Baker Company felt we were entitled to a little relaxation. This came to an end on New Years Eve, as the 2nd was ordered back to the front. Once our equipment had been replaced, and were supplied with ammo and hand grenades, we were ready to move out.

Baker Company was given the mission to destroy an enemy roadblock. We were to jump off at 0600 hours on New Years Day, 1951. So, men wrote letters home that night. G.W. wrote my mother a letter for me.

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The 2nd Infantry Division, and the French, had set up a line of defense—in South Korea. Word came down for us to set out booby-traps, and to be ready for a big attack. We fixed our foxholes to take artillery and mortar fire, stocked them with ammo and grenades, but the attack never materialized. Patrols were sent out—within three miles of our position—to see if they could locate the enemy. They returned without ever making contact, so headquarters wanted a patrol sent to the Twin Tunnels to see if the enemy was located in that area.

On the 28th of January, a motorized patrol was sent out from Fox and Charlie Companies. When they returned, they reported the same thing—no enemy. Headquarters wasn't satisfied, so the following day they sent out another patrol, which consisted of forty-four men and two platoon leaders. They had six barmen, one 75mm and one 57mm recoilless rifles, and one 3.5 rocket launcher. The patrol was ambushed by two-hundred Chinese, which forced them to leave their vehicles and run up a hill where they had to set up to defend themselves. Unfortunately, twenty guys who had joined Charlie Company only four days earlier, stayed with their vehicles—they were all killed.

A larger patrol was sent to rescue the other patrol, but they too got into a fierce fire fight. So, the rest of the company and the French were sent to help. We ended up in a three day battle that cost the division and French over 1300 casualties. However, there were over 4000 Chinese casualties.

This was later known as the Slaughter at Twin Tunnels.

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During the 1st and 2nd of February, our wounded were evacuated to the battalion aid station. Baker Company, along with the French, four tanks and two twin-40's, set up a perimeter around the 37th FA. The entire 2nd Division was to take the town of Chipyeong-ni, which was a few miles from the Twin Tunnels.

On the 3rd of February, under a heavy barrage of fire from our artillery, mortars, tanks and twin-40's, we took the town. The following day we moved into the town, with Baker Company, and the French being placed

in reserves. Messages were coming in that the Chinese were coming over the mountains on both our flanks—the town was surrounded.

Six days later, on the ninth, Baker Company was sent to Hill 503, which was located about three-and-a-half miles out of town. We were to take the hill, then report back if we noticed any enemy troop movement. It took us several hours to climb to the top of the hill, because of the deep snow. Lucky for us, there was no enemy when we reached the top. If we had seen any Chinese, the liaison officer was to call in for artillery support. It was extremely cold that night and we all wanted off that miserable hill, but we were ordered to stay.

Our right flank was attacked during the morning of the eleventh, but by daylight the enemy withdrew. Two men had been wounded and a few men were to take them back to base camp. Later that afternoon the men returned saying they had run into some Chinese, and they had left the two wounded men at the bottom of the hill. The company CO reported the enemy sighting to the battalion and requested for us to return to base camp—request denied. Around 1400 hours, battalion called back telling us to return. When we reached the bottom of the hill, we found the two wounded soldiers—dead and naked. We collected their bodies and carried them back to the aid station. Needless to say, a lot of men were mad at the allies who left them. If an officer hadn't been present, those men would have been shot.

When we finally reached camp, we were able to get a good, hot meal. G.W. and I gathered up all the can-heat we could find, then we went to our foxholes, took our boots off and changed our socks. That night around 2300 hours, flares and artillery started going off, which lasted until daylight. Word soon spread that our supply road was cut off, and that a company from the 38th Infantry Regiment had been annihilated. To our rear, another outfit was engaged in a fierce firefight—the Chinese and North Koreans were everywhere.

Early morning of the twelfth, the French—who were to our right—were hit hard. Our tanks, and twin-40's, moved so they could hit the Chinese as they were going up the backside of the hill. However, the French called them off, fixed their bayonets and went into hand-to-hand combat; they had a lot of casualties. All day long, helicopters from the aid station were evacuating the wounded.

On the night of the thirteenth, the perimeter around Chipyong-ni was taking light fire, which stopped at 2100 hours. Then all hell broke loose! As artillery and mortar fire started hitting inside our perimeter, the mess tent was hit and set on fire. Some men were killed when the battalion command tent was hit. They kept shelling for hours; while my foxhole buddy and I were both trying to get deeper in the hole, hoping a shell wouldn't get us. When it stopped, the bugles and whistles started blowing, and the yells of "Bonsai" started, which scares the hell out of you.

Charlie Company was getting hit hard, and taking on casualties. The sarge came over and told G.W. and me to take my BAR [*Browning automatic rifle*], and go help—which we did until daylight. Of the fourteen clips I took, I fired ten, which totaled two-hundred rounds.

The following day wasn't any better. Fox and George Companies were getting hit hard; booby-traps were going off, flares going up everywhere, and the Chinese kept coming. Air support was called for and around 1530 hours they came in flying low, due to the bad weather. As they came in to drop their loads, the Chinese fired at them. Artillery and mortar fire kept coming in, and men were going up and down the line passing out ammo and hand grenades—casualties were mounting in these two companies.

Later that night, the Chinese pulled an all out attack—on every position. Baker Company, and one platoon from the French Battalion, was called out of reserve to mount a counterattack and take back ground that had been lost by Fox and George Companies. As our platoon sergeant was gathering up everyone, the French had already left and were at the bottom of the hill when we arrived. After several attempts, and many casualties, we started up the hill again. We were within fifty yards of the top when we came under fire; we returned fire, and kept climbing. When we finally reached the top, I jumped into a foxhole and began to lay down fire from my BAR. Our planes were flying overhead and when the weather broke, targets were called in for them to hit. As the Chinese began to withdraw, the planes came in dropping napalm bombs—catching them in the open.

Suddenly, I was flying through the air and not knowing what had happened, I was scared to death. I hurt all over and couldn't hear a thing as I was pulled by another soldier down the hill. As I looked around I didn't see G.W. anywhere. I was taken to the aid station. Here they put some stuff in my ears, wrapped my left wrist, and sat me down on a locker. It was over

an hour before my hearing come back. I then asked if I could leave, which they said was okay. However, they told me to come back if my hearing left again. By the time I got back to the top of the hill, the Chinese were in full retreat. The foxhole that I was in had a big hole in front of it and my BAR had been damaged beyond repair. Since I had not been able to find GW, I asked if anyone had seen him. That's when one of the guys gave me the bad news—he had been killed.

I immediately went down to the aid station to look for his body. When I found him, I just sat down and cried. He was my foxhole buddy from the first day I transferred from the 37th FA. For six months we had been through hell together, now we would never get to go on that deer hunting trip we had always talked about.

We lost half of our company; either wounded or killed. Three platoon sergeants were killed, among them was ours; he was a swell guy. Two lieutenants were killed, and one wounded.

I returned to my foxhole and took the letter G.W. wrote my mother out of his pack. I also took the letter he wrote to his mother and sent it with the next outgoing mail. Then I took the rest of his belongings to the supply sergeant so they could be shipped home.

I found the body of my drill sergeant that I had during my basic training at Fort Knox. I never knew he was in Fox Company, but I wish I had—I sure would have liked to thank him for all he taught me. That night, while alone in my foxhole—I cried again. Every year on a special day, I remember G.W. by standing up and saluting him. Then I thank him for being my buddy.

On the sixteenth they began cleaning up the frozen, dead bodies. The local civilians were paid to bury them. It was a sad sight seeing all those bodies lying all along the perimeter; it was said they numbered in the thousands. The following day a convoy started coming in and we were able to get new clothes. I also received a new BAR, which I had to disassemble and clean the grease out of.

* * * * *

On March 1, 1951, Baker and Charlie Companies were to lead an attack with artillery support. An L-5 spotter plane flew overhead to call in

air support, if we ran into trouble. As two tanks and two twin-40's advanced along the road, their color panels got screwed up and the wrong panels were placed on the tanks; the jets came within a hair of firing on them, but pulled up just at the right moment.

Our objective was to take a hill where the Chinese had already dug in. As Charlie Company came under heavy fire, both companies withdrew. So, the L-5 called in some jets, which strafed the hillside, and dropped some napalm. Then the artillery was called in and they fired for an hour.

Later that afternoon, with few casualties, the hill was secured. We were told to set up a perimeter and be ready for a counterattack. Baker Company began receiving artillery fire on their position during the early hours of March 2nd. When the shelling stopped, the blowing of bugles and whistles, along with the screaming began, which was accompanied with small arms fire. Then Charlie Company came under fire; which lasted until daybreak. Both companies held their ground with very few casualties; Baker Company had six and Charlie Company had nine. There were enemy bodies lying all over the place.

After the fighting had stopped we began searching the bodies of the enemy, some of which had property belonging to GI's. Items such as wallets, watches, and rings—you name it, they had it. Some even had on GI clothes. Men were so outraged at the sight of the enemy wearing rings that belonged to GI's. They had cut off their fingers to retrieve the rings. Needless to say, Military Code 20-4 had gone out the window.

* * * * *

War in Korea was going from one mountain to another. Along with the French, the 2nd Infantry Division moved in the Marines position on this one particular hill. The 2nd placed men on both sides of a road, with the tanks and twin-40's on the road. On the 4th of April, all hell broke loose in the valley. Artillery shells started raining down on the mountain to our front, as the 2nd and the French began their attack through the mountains. Soon, the artillery let up and the jets took over.

This went on for days, as we took one mountain after another. Every morning at 0700 hours, we would start our advancement as soon as the artillery eased up, and the planes started up. It was difficult getting our

wounded down the hills and our supplies up the mountains. Men were tired and knowing that we would be moving out the first thing in the morning, we didn't even bother digging foxholes.

After six days of going up and down those mountains, Baker Company came under heavy fire, which pinned us down about halfway up one of the mountains. Neither artillery nor planes were called in; because they were afraid they might hit us. We were trying to withdraw when some of the new replacements got up and ran—they got hit. This went on for two hours before we could withdraw with the wounded and dead far enough down the hill so our tanks and twin-40's could provide us with cover. Finally, we were back far enough so the artillery, and planes, could be called in. They hit the hill and the men that were left from Baker Company, along with the French, attacked and secured the hill.

We stayed there for two days, and then we were on the move again. The men began to wonder when we were going to stop and rest. Men were so tired they were falling out of line, and could hardly climb the hills—let alone fight. We had become tired of sleeping in foxholes, eating C-rations, and most of all—we stunk.

Days of being on the attack, and constantly climbing mountain after mountain, were beginning to take its toll on the company. Morale was getting bad. We needed a rest! Taking a second hill, we saw a big lake and a town; here our attack stopped. Orders came down for us to dig in and set up booby-traps, and to send out patrols. Finally, we were getting a much needed rest. It was late April and the weather was beginning to get better.

Word was passed down that the enemy was using a trail that led out of the village, and that there was a lot of activity there. Two platoons, one each from Baker and Charlie Companies, were sent out during the night to set up an ambush along the trail. About an hour out, the platoons came under fire—we had walked into a trap. We called for help and they sent the French. After a two hour firefight, the enemy left. The darkness of night made it difficult to tend to the wounded, of which we had several, plus six men that had been killed. One of those wounded was my foxhole buddy—Bob—who had only been with the company for two months.

* * * * *

During the first weeks of May 1951, the weather had become hot and rainy. The division was moved into a new position on the front line. Word had it there was a large build up of enemy forces in a sector they called No Name Line. We had received some new replacements and they were put through training on firing the different weapons, and going on patrols. Now that it had turned hot, we had to put up with mosquitoes and the awful smell of the rice paddies.

Our division was in the center, an ROK outfit was to our left, and the French were to our rear. All companies had set out their booby-traps, and flares.

Early one morning, the expected enemy offensive began hitting our division. Bugles and whistles were blowing, and everywhere you looked you saw the enemy. All hell had broken out along the line, with the fighting continuing all through the night. We beat back attack after attack, until the enemy withdrew at daylight. All up and down the line, the wounded and dead were collected and taken to the battalion aid station.

The following night, the ROK was hit hard and they took off—no one knew to where. The divisions left flank was now getting hit hard. Some of the French, with platoons from Baker and Charlie Companies, were called in to fill the gap that had been created when the ROK bailed out. We came under heavy fire and had to withdraw under the support of artillery and tanks. The fighting went on until daylight, and then the men from Baker and Charlie Companies made a counterattack, taking back the ground that had been lost.

Before noon, the enemy counterattacked in full force. Our planes, and artillery, were slowing them down, but they kept coming. The men manning machine guns were doing all they could and men in their foxholes were running short on ammo and grenades.

We were told to withdraw to a new position, but no one knew the location of the position. So, everyone headed for the rear with the enemy hot on our trail. We were unable to call in air support, because the enemy was too close. Even the tanks and twin-40's were of little help, because they were also withdrawing. The enemy had gone around the division and set up a roadblock. If this was not taken care of soon, we would be surrounded. One company, with tanks and twin-40's, was sent to clear out the roadblock.

It was two hours before it was clear enough so the division could pass through.

Finally, the division was taken off the line during the first of June. We were sent to the rear where we received new clothes, and replacements. As we got paid, we were allowed to go into town. Here the men bought things to send home.

* * * * *

While we were in a rear assembly area, we were able to get a well deserved hot shower, and a hair cut. Word was spreading around that the men who came over with the 23rd would be rotating home. Some men were going to Japan every week for R&R, which took ten-to-twelve days for a round trip.

There were seven of us left from with the company since the beginning, and during the last two days of June we were flown to Japan. We returned on the 10th of July and caught up with the rest of the company, which was at an assembly area. After arriving five of the guys were rotated home, leaving two of us.

Orders came down for the division to move out; we were going to relieve the Marines and take over their position. After we were on the line, with the French to our left, we sent out night patrols to set up ambushes. Word had it that the enemy was amassing a large force, so L-5's were sent out everyday. They only reported seeing a few enemy troops in the hills. Every morning I hoped to be called to rotate home, but it didn't come; we moved to a new position.

Several days later, we received orders to take, and secure, the high ground that overlooked a village. Word had it the enemy was stock piling supplies in the village. A patrol was sent out to investigate, and destroy the supplies. Having found the supplies, and setting the village on fire, the patrol returned without ever seeing the enemy.

During the later part of July, Baker Company was ordered to take a hill and secure it for an outpost; with tanks and twin-40's for support, we attacked. After two hours of heavy fighting, we withdrew. The artillery and planes were called in, then, after five hours of fighting we attacked again securing the hill. During the fighting I was hit in my back right shoulder,

with a piece of shrapnel. Since the medic fixed me up, and it wasn't a bad wound, it was not recorded. I went to the company CO and told him I couldn't take it anymore—my nerves were shot. He told me to hang in there for a few more weeks, as I should be rotated home.

* * * * *

One day I was called out and told to pack my things, and report to headquarters—I was going home. Another soldier was told the same thing; we were the last two men that went to Korea in July of 1950.

While at headquarters, we were assigned guard duty around the Battalion Aid Station, to check the refugees as they passed through our area. We stayed there until the first of September, and then we caught a convoy back to Pusan, and shipped out.

* * * * *

In November 1951, I arrived in Seattle, Washington. There I was paid and given a complete set of Army clothes. Then I was given a train ticket to Canton, Ohio, along with a thirty day furlough, after which time I was to report to Indian Gap, Pennsylvania. I served my last year of service in Germany.

~~Seven~~

Robert “Bob” Bouterse

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On September 28, 1948, a day after my seventeenth birthday, John Bontrager—a school friend—and I drove to Fort Wayne, Indiana, with only one objective—join the U.S. Navy.

After taking an aptitude test and a general IQ test, which were followed by a physical examination, we had to take an eye exam. John passed with flying colors and so did I—with my glasses on. I then had to take my glasses off and read the chart—I failed. They soon informed me that the Navy would not take me due to my eyes being bad without glasses. My dream of being a sailor—like my father—had come to an end.

Since they would not take me, John decided he would not join either.

As we were leaving the Navy Recruiting Office we couldn't help but notice the Army Recruiting Office across the hall. We looked at each other and said, “What the hell,” so we went in.

The sergeant, seated behind the desk, asked what we needed.

We replied, “To join the U.S. Army.”

He asked if we had anything wrong with us, and we said, “No.”

He said, “Sign your John Henry right here.” He thought John was trying to be a wise guy, because his middle name was really “Henry.”

Seven days later, on the 5th of October, my parents drove us back to Fort Wayne where we boarded a bus that took us to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky. Here we would take our basic training. Upon our arrival we were met by a Master Sergeant who informed us that for the next eight weeks he was going to be our mother and that we had no fathers. So, in his eyes we were all you know whats?

After graduation, most of the guys we went through basic with were sent to Germany. John had requested to go to Germany and I requested Fort Knox, Kentucky. So, true to form, the Army sent John to the other end of camp to await orders for Japan, and I became company clerk at Camp Breckinridge.

For the next eight weeks, as the new bunch of recruits were going through their basic training, I pretty much did whatever I wanted too. I worked if I felt like it, went to the firing range, or just walked around acting like a big shot in front of the new guys. At the end of the eight weeks, I again requested a transfer to Fort Knox. However, they informed me that the administrative school was full. In the meantime, John had received orders to report to Camp Stoneman, California, where he would be sent to Guam, Korea, Japan, or some other island station. Wanting to stay with him, I requested the same assignment; I received orders to report to Camp Stoneman.

We received a fourteen day furlough to visit our families and friends, because we were going overseas. Two days before going on leave I came down with rubella measles, causing me to stay in the camp hospital for seven days. My commanding officer revoked my furlough and issued me a new one, this way I wouldn't lose any days at home. Since John was able to go home ahead of me, he headed back to camp three or four days before I did. During basic training I met Roy Ligon, from Paducah, Kentucky, and we were able to go back to camp together.

On May 19, 1949, Roy and I boarded a troop train in Evansville, Indiana headed for Pittsburgh, California. After four days, and several backaches, we arrived at Camp Stoneman. Three or four days later, I finally saw John; he was in the mess hall. He told me he was on alert, which meant within the next forty-eight hours he could be shipping out. So, we went to San Francisco to party a little before we parted company.

On the 31st of May, John left for Japan where he was assigned to the 24th Infantry Division. Roy shipped out to Guam on the 3rd of June, and on the sixth, I left for Yokohama, Japan.

Being a sailor, my father gave me some advice before shipping out—to get a top bunk. This was so no one would be above me if they became

seasick. During our fourteen day voyage, I never got sick. It made me think, I may have been a good sailor after all.

Finally, on June 19, 1949, the *USS General Hodges* docked at Yokohama. After we disembarked, we were loaded onto trucks and taken to Camp Drake—home of the 7th Cavalry Regiment. This was one of the three regiments that made up the 1st Cavalry Division.

In the Second World War, Camp Drake was used as a Japanese Army officer training facility; so, everything there was pretty much first class. It had a racetrack complete with pari-mutual betting, a movie theater, huge gym, bowling alley, library, churches, swimming pools, and service clubs. All were available to camp personnel.

I was assigned to D Company, which was a heavy weapons company.

In the early part of July, the entire regiment went to Camp McNair, which was located about half way up one side of an extinct volcano—Mt. Fujiyama. The camp consisted of four-man tents, a medical tent, mess tent, and last-but-not-least the latrine tents. These were placed over a slit trench, similar to the outhouses we had when I was a kid—only more “holes” to sit on.

When the latrine was almost full, civilian farmers with their ox-drawn wagons would come and fill up barrels, which were known as “honey buckets.” The contents were used to fertilize their rice paddies, and gardens. Needless to say, we had been warned not to eat fresh-grown vegetables for fear of dysentery.

We were there for more than two months, and during this time I was transferred from supply clerk to the heavy machine gun squad. The .30 caliber machine gun, which was mounted on a tripod, was a rapid firing gun with a water-cooled barrel. We only got to fire it one time on the firing range, because of our limited amount of ammunition. So, most of our time was spent learning, and practicing, how to set it up and tear it down.

On the 7th of September we left McNair for Camp McGill—in Yokohama—so the 5th Cavalry Regiment could take their turn training at the camp. We finally returned to Camp Drake in November where we resumed our normal training. During this month everyone that had been drafted, or was on a two-year enlistment, was sent back to the states. We read, and heard, about the political unrest occurring in Korea. However, we

were told this had nothing to do with these men leaving, and certainly would not affect us.

As 1950 began, I decided the Army was a place for me and even dreamed of attending West Point—becoming an officer. So, I enrolled in an eight week NCO leadership school at Camp McGill, which turned out to be torture training. The school started on the 3rd of March, and two days later I received two demerits for having my boots laced the wrong way. Our days began at 4:30 AM and lasted until 7:30 PM, with getting only Wednesday afternoons off.

Each day we stood for two inspections, one inside our barracks and the other one outside. We had five officers inspecting one cadet simultaneously. One morning, one of the officers asked about a small mark on my face. I informed him that I had nicked my face shaving; he gave me three demerits for destroying government property. After dinner, we went on six-and-a-half mile runs; to be sure our food didn't turn to fat. Of the eighty-five men that started, only forty-nine of us graduated—I was third in class. If I could pass the competitive exam, I felt confident of making it through West Point.

While I was attending school, D Company had been sent back to McNair for another six weeks of training; I arrived back to D Company before they left.

On June 25, 1950, the North Korean Army invaded South Korea, and we were immediately put on alert. All furloughs and passes were canceled. However, we were again told that we probably would not be involved in any way.

In typical military blunder, most of our experienced platoon sergeants, and strategic personnel, were transferred to the 24th Infantry Division. Around the 10th of July, the 24th would be the first American troops deployed to Korea. We immediately began training for amphibious landings; we knew where we were headed.

We boarded the *USS William C. Weigle* and on the 22nd of July, the ship anchored in Pohang Dong, Korea. We disembarked by climbing down huge, rope ladders into our waiting LCT. They told us to expect medium to heavy resistance as we approached the beaches; I was one among forty guys who were huddled together, terrified of the unknown, and scared of dying.

During our trip ashore, I started reciting Psalms 27: 1-3 in my head, which I did every day for the next few months.

After landing, with no resistance, we loaded onto trucks and headed inland until darkness fell. The 1st BN was deployed on hilltops that completely surrounded a small valley. Sometime after dark, a shot was heard and the entire battalion fired into the valley—at unknown targets. The following morning, a cow and local farmer lay dead in the valley. I had ordered my squad not to fire unless they saw movement. Our battalion commander asked if my gun had been fired during the night. I told him it had not; he congratulated me.

The following day we moved up in support of some ROK troops, who were located on the south side of a mountain that had North Korean troops on the north side. The ROK soldiers were firing their weapons up in the air; I guess they hoped their bullets would fall on the North Koreans. We found this to be typical military tactics of the untrained ROK Army.

We were able to push the NKPA troops back a few miles as we approached the city of Taejon. Along the way, there were many ditches that were lined with bodies of South Korean men who—with their hands tied behind their backs—had been executed. Women were wailing as they walked amongst the bodies in search of their loved ones—a sight and sound, I have never forgotten.

On the twenty-seventh, a truck arrived in our area and the company commander told me to get on it. I asked him where was it going and he said he didn't know, but he had orders to put me and another guy on the truck. We traveled about ninety miles to the Eighth Army Headquarters, which was located at Waegwan. Everyone there had their uniforms pressed, brass polished, and their shoes shined. For more than a week, we had not bathed, shaved, or even changed clothes—we were pretty scruffy looking.

Neither one of us knew why we were summoned there. As we walked around the base we passed a one-star general who we did not salute; this was something you didn't do in combat. He began to chew us out when he realized where we had come from. Then he proceeded to tell us the only reason soldiers were taken off the front was to take the West Point examinations. After three days—eight hours a day—of testing, we were to return to our unit; the War Department would let us know the results, in

September. When it was time to leave, they provided us with no transportation; so, we walked and bummed rides and meals when possible. Finally, three days later we rejoined our unit.

In the first two weeks, a good friend—who had transferred to battalion headquarters—was killed by mortar fire after a Korean woman carrying a baby on her back had entered our area asking our interpreter for directions. Within minutes after she left, mortar shells began to rain down with pinpoint accuracy. Thirty minutes later, another trooper and myself found the woman; the baby was a radio, so we knew right away she was an enemy agent. We took her back, and our Korean interpreter pulled out his pistol and shot her in the head; he never asked her one question.

Two days later we set up our machine gun on a slight rise, which overlooked a railroad track some three-hundred yards away. For the refugees heading south, this was the only authorized evacuation route. About every fifty yards were signs telling the refugees to stay on the tracks, and under no circumstances were they to get off the tracks. Suddenly, about five or six women, four or five children, and three or four elderly men—who were wearing their traditional stovepipe hats—began walking toward our gun emplacement.

I was instructed, by a major, to fire my gun in front of them, which I did. Without changing their expressions, or their gait, they kept coming. Again, I fired in front of them with the same results. He then informed me that I was not to allow them to proceed any further, and to open fire on them. Needless to say, with the target being women, children, and old men, I protested.

The first major battle that we were involved in took place in a cemetery. While being pinned down for a few hours with machine gun and mortar fire, we were able to repel several attacks. The only thing that separated us from the enemy was a three-foot high stone fence located in front of the cemetery. The Koreans buried their dead in a sitting position, so the cemetery was full of mounds about three feet high, and three feet wide. Otto Graml and I were behind one of these mounds, and our 75mm recoilless rifle was on the mound in front of us. Every time it fired, we slid backwards down our mound. Seven were killed, and seven wounded during this battle.

A few days later, while sharing my foxhole with Eddie—a squad member—we were being shelled by enemy mortars. When the shelling stopped, I asked him if he was alright, but I got no response. I turned to check on him and found that the back of his head had been blown off. We were only inches apart and I didn't get a scratch. The Lord was obviously watching over me.

Shortly afterwards, we pulled back in reserve for about three days. By this time we had lost several men and with American replacements being unavailable, I received two ROK soldiers in my squad. They didn't speak English, and I didn't speak Korean, so there was a slight communication problem. One day I was cleaning my rifle while I was sitting in front of my tent, when one of the ROK soldiers noticed my ammo belt. It had suspenders to help ease the pressure on my hips and waist. He picked up the belt, removed the suspenders, attached them to his belt, and adjusted them to fit him—without ever saying a word. So, without saying a word, I picked up my rifle and hit him in the back of the head with the butt of the rifle, knocking him to the ground I reclaimed my suspenders. He must have gotten the message, because he never tried to steal from me again.

We returned back to the front and immediately came under enemy attack. Suddenly, my other ROK replacement got up and started to run away I turned around, took aim and shot him in the leg. He then crawled back to his position, and neither one of them ever bugged-out during an attack again.

One night during August, one of my men was manning a gun on top of a hill and while he was talking on a sound-powered telephone, lightning struck the wire and knocked him unconscious. After he came to, he was taken to the aid station, where they gave him two aspirins and told him to go back to his post.

During the last part of August we moved to new positions along the Nakdong River. In the early days of September we were involved in several attacks and counterattacks, which resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. We received air support from Second World War vintage P-51's. Within seconds after dropping their napalm canisters, at the base of the hill, fire swept to the top scorching everything in its path. As we took some of the hills that had been victims of napalm bombing, we found bodies that had their clothes completely burned off.

On the 11th of September, we were near the village of Shindo and were using a one-room house as our headquarters. Inside were Cleo Seeger, our radioman, and Lt. Damian Folch. It was mid-afternoon as I was walking past the doorway, when Seeger called for me to cover the radio so he could go to the latrine. For some unknown reason, I told him I didn't want to go inside the house. Finally, the lieutenant ordered me inside.

We were providing cover fire for Charlie Company, whose commanding officer I knew from Japan. He was on the other end of the phone and as I put my end up to my ear, the room suddenly became full of smoke and dust. Dazed, I crawled outside; my glasses were gone and my back felt like it had been burned. Hearing the other two guys moaning inside the house, I went back in and brought Seeger out. He had been hit in the thigh with a piece of shrapnel, which penetrated his leg leaving a large exit wound. After applying a bandage to his wound, I went back for the lieutenant. When I got him outside, I noticed that one of his hands was just hanging on by skin—it had almost been severed. Captain Kueffer, our commanding officer, helped with getting his hand bandaged. We then put both of them in the back of a three-quarter ton truck, and I drove them to the aid station.

As I arrived, I yelled for the medics to give them some morphine, because they were in pain. I offered to help unload them, but I couldn't get out of the truck; this was the first time I had realized I too was wounded. All three of us were treated then transported to a M.A.S.H. unit. I was flown on a stretcher strapped to a side-pod of a helicopter, which meant I was exposed to the elements of the weather. The flight wasn't bad, but it sure was dusty during takeoff and landing.

After being treated at the M.A.S.H. unit, I was taken by ambulance to Taegu, where I was loaded onto a train headed for Pusan. The car I rode in was equipped with web strapping, to hold the stretchers, which were stacked three high. The following day we arrived at Pusan and I was placed on an airplane, suspended by the same kind of straps that were on the train—I was still in the same stretcher. After spending a night at Itazuki, Japan, I was then flown to Osaka, where I was admitted to the Army General Hospital.

Upon arriving, the first thing I did was write home to assure my parents that my wound was not life threatening. It was a good thing I did,

because a day after my letter arrived they received three telegrams from the government; they said I had been slightly wounded, severely wounded, and killed in action.

By the second day, my left leg—from the knee to the ankle—had swollen to double its size and had begun to turn a dark color. It was oozing a black, thick liquid that had a foul odor. As the doctor was making his rounds, he stopped at my bed and read my charts. He informed his assistant that he would have to amputate my leg below the knee. As he turned to see the next patient, I asked him if I had heard him correctly; he replied that I had. It being “my” leg, I asked if there was anything else he could try. Even though gangrene had already set in, he said he could try draining it, but I could possibly have problems with it for years. I told him to give it a shot. He said it was against his better judgment, but he agreed.

Two days later they operated on my leg, making a three inch incision on the left side of my calf; they drained a pint-and-a-half of infected liquid. Since the flesh was too rotten, they were unable to put sutures in, so they used a butterfly bandage. I was then confined to bed for two weeks to see if the incision would close by itself.

Later, they took an x-ray of my entire leg and found a couple of large pieces of shrapnel in my thigh. They took me back to the operating room and removed them, plus sutured up my earlier incision with stainless steel stitches—the butterfly bandage hadn’t done its job. The following day the stitches pulled through the skin, and once again the wound was wide open.

They tried this same procedure three or four more times, all with the same results. So, they tried a skin graft, which after two attempts was also unsuccessful. Word around the hospital was any patient needing to stay there for thirty days would be returned to the States. Having already been there two months, I became a challenge for the doctors.

A guy I knew from D Company was in the same ward, but he only stayed two days before being sent stateside. Before he left, he told me a guy from my squad was on the floor below us, so I hurried down to see him. There lying in a bed was my first gunner—Angel Gomez. When he saw me he smiled, and it was obvious a lot of his teeth had been broken off. His right arm had been amputated below the elbow. As we talked, I told him that because of his arm he would be going home. He said missing his arm

didn't bother him that much, but he wondered if he would ever walk again as he threw back his sheet to expose his amputated legs. He was firing his machine gun when it took a direct hit from a mortar shell.

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It was around the end of November when I received word from home that my brother Jim had been drafted into the Army. After completing his basic training at Camp Breckinridge, he was assigned to Fort Myers, Virginia—home of Arlington National Cemetery. This was fine with me, because I didn't want him to go where I had been.

December arrived with temperatures dipping to thirty below zero, or colder. As I walked around the ward, I noticed the patients with frostbite outnumbered those with gunshot wounds by three-to-one. One day some of us were playing at a card table that we had set up at the foot of the bed of a patient with severe frostbite. As his big toe began to throb with pain, he reached down to wiggle it and it fell off in his hand; he passed out. Needless to say, we all got a little queasy.

On the 10th of December I was transferred to the 8th Station Hospital in Kobe, Japan—ninety-four days after I was wounded. My doctor told me to expect to be there a couple of months, because infected wounds healed slower in Japan. He also said that I would eventually return to duty—in Korea.

Two days before Christmas, they removed another piece of shrapnel—about 11mm in size—from my left thigh. During the first week of January my leg had scabbed over, and I was told following a seven day leave I would be departing for Korea. However, three days before I was to leave, my leg ruptured and I had to return to the hospital. Once again it was oozing the stinking, black tar-like liquid. On the 31st of January I had more surgery to remove shrapnel that had been discovered near the wound—this was my fifth operation.

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On the 21st of March, while I was playing cards, a ward boy came in and told me I had a visitor. I turned around and there stood John Bontrager—he was on a five day R&R. I was able to get a special two day pass so we

could go into town and bring each other up to date on what we had done in the past two years.

John was able to spend one night in an empty bed at the hospital. He then had to go to Camp Drake, then back to his unit in Korea.

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I was transferred to the Army hospital at Nara on the 9th of April, which was pretty much a rehabilitation center; it was located thirty-five miles from Kobe.

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May 1st, known as May Day, is the communists New Years Day. A group of Japanese communists began to protest in front of the hospital, and as the day progressed they got rowdier. Having locked all the doors we placed a machine gun, with three riflemen, on the roof. As the crowd began to rattle the front doors, one of the guys with me on the roof whistled. When they looked up, I fixed the machine gun on them and they suddenly quieted down, and began to leave.

Two days later I received orders to return to my unit; however, I came down with malaria—of all things. It must have been from the rice paddy water I drank eight months earlier. For the next five days I mostly laid flat on my back, with a temperature reaching as high as 105.6 degrees.

It was around this time that I became the recipient of a one-year “involuntary extension” on my enlistment; all thanks to our illustrious “give ‘em hell” president—Mr. Truman. However, I wasn’t alone, it happened to all military personnel.

On the 16th of May, eight months and five days after I had been wounded, I went by train from Kyoto to Tokyo ending up at Camp Drake—my original base. While there I saw three guys from D Company who, because of rotation, were on their way home. This gave me hope that my days in Korea would not be long.

Leaving Camp Drake on the twentieth, I arrived at Pusan two days later. From there I traveled by train to Chonan and after spending a night, I was on to Seoul. The day after I arrived at Seoul, I rejoined D Company at

the 38th parallel. There were very few guys that I knew; most of the guys I had been with, had either been killed, wounded or rotated home. However, Otto was still there and we had quite a reunion.

I was asked by the first sergeant to take over as squad leader of my old machine gun squad. However, I informed him I wasn't climbing up and down any more hills, so he asked me what I wanted to do. I told him I could be the jeep driver for the company commander, which they just happened to need—I got the job.

My second day on the job, I was following a tank down a dirt road when my right tire hit a mine, tipping us over. The lieutenant who was riding with me was thrown from the jeep and severely mangled his foot. Lucky for me, I was uninjured.

On the 8th of July, I was informed that I would be rotating home—Otto had already gone home. The company commander said if I would stay he would promote me to sergeant, and after sixty days to master sergeant. My reply was thanks, but no thanks.

There were only two original members of D Company left, me and another guy. The following day we left for Inchon. Here we boarded the *Weigel* and sailed to Sasebo, Japan.

We boarded the *USS Woodward* for our journey home. Eleven days later we docked in San Francisco, where we were greeted by a military band, hundreds of waving and cheering civilians, and a banner that read, "Welcome home. Heroes."

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At Fort Custer, Michigan, I received orders to report to Fort Meade, Maryland, where I stayed until the first of November. On the fifth, another guy and I reported to Fort Hayes, in Columbus, Ohio. He was sent to Lexington, Kentucky and I went to Toledo, Ohio—to be recruiters.

On the 10th of June, 1951, I received orders to report to Fort Hayes. Two days later, after serving three years, eight months, and six days of active duty, I was honorably discharged from the United States Army.[\[2\]](#)

~~*Eight*~~

Fred Connolly

31st Infantry Regiment

7th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was born on June 11, 1931, in Bronx, New York—one of fourteen children born to Michael and Mary Connolly.

I entered the first grade at PS-160 in South Jamaica, Queens. Needless to say, times were hard in those days. One day the rent was due, so we moved to Saint Albans, Queens—here I enrolled in school at PS-36. I was in the sixth grade, and one day my father came to school. He told me to gather my hat and coat, he had found a job for me; this was the end of my schooling. After working for three or four months at a drugstore in Queens, I went to work on a farm. Here we planted, watered, and harvested vegetables to sale. Being that there were fourteen of us children, we all had to help out at home.

After turning seventeen I enlisted in the U.S. Army. I was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey for my basic training. In the summer of 1949 I headed for Occupational Duty in Hokkaido, Japan—as a member of the 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division. I shall never forget the name of the ship I sailed on, the *USS Patrick*, because I was sick for twenty-two straight days.

* * * * *

After being in Japan for fifteen months, I was hoping to go home soon. However, it was not to be; North Korea had invaded South Korea. All enlisted men whose time was about up were given an extra year of service by President Truman. Like a lot of other men I would be leaving Japan, but not for home—for Korea

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On September 15, 1950, along with the First Marine Division, the 7th Infantry Division made the Inchon Landing. We encountered a lot of sniper fire, but the fighting was light. The following morning as we headed towards Seoul, I had my first encounter with death; one of my men was killed. We covered his eighteen year old body with a poncho, so the “grave boys” would take him back to the rear.

The fighting at Seoul was extremely intense; it was door-to-door, house-to-house.

After Seoul had been secured, our lieutenant ordered me to take my squad out in front of the company, about three-hundred yards, and set up an outpost. On our way, we passed through a village where we met an elderly man, two women, two little boys who were about two or three years old, and a little girl who looked to be ten or eleven years old. The young girl had coal black hair that reached her waist. We gave the man some cigarettes, and for the women we all chipped in some C-rations and coffee packs; then we gave the kids some candy bars. Now we moved out to set up the outpost for the night.

The following morning, around 0600 hours, we headed back to the company. As we passed through the village we looked for the North Korean civilians we had met the day before. We found the elderly man with his hands tied behind his back and a wire wrapped around his neck. Both of the women had their throats cut, and the two boys were sitting by the mother—crying. We looked for the little girl, but couldn’t find her. As we came to the end of the village we saw her standing by a tree. However, as we approached her, we noticed her feet were about six inches off the ground. Her hands were tied behind her back, leaves had been shoved in her mouth, and her beautiful coal black hair reached about her head as it wrapped around a limb.

After we cut her down, we placed all the bodies between the two little shacks they lived in and covered their bodies with our ponchos. We took the two little boys with us and turned them over to the chaplain, who placed them in an orphanage. Apparently some North Korean troops came into the village during the night, and these innocent people would not tell them of our location. This is how they treated their own people.

The following day we moved out again—this time to the 38th parallel. As we walked along on a curvy mountain road, one of the guys in front yelled out that something was moving in the bushes. With our rifles ready, one of the guys pulled back a bush noticing a hole in the side of the mountain. Crawling in, he found fourteen kids living there. We asked the kids where they got the American trenching shovels they used to dig the hole. They informed us that three American soldiers had been ambushed and killed by North Korean troops. They told us that they had buried the three Americans, and had hidden their rifles and ammo. The kids led us to their graves and helped us dig up the bodies. Along with the bodies of the three GI's, we sent the kids back to the rear.

Finally, we made our way to the Chosin Reservoir where the temperature was dipping to thirty-five to forty below zero. We thought we were going to be home by Christmas, but that all changed after Thanksgiving—the Chinese entered the war.

After ten days of fighting at the Chosin, of the 3,200 men of the 31st Infantry Regiment only 385 came back alive. The rest had either been killed, frozen to death, captured, or were missing. We returned south of the 38th parallel.

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Around the end of August, 1951, my lieutenant told me I was going home. I felt both excitement and sadness. I wanted to go home and see my family, but at the same time I was saying bye to men that I had lived with, and fought with, for the last two years.

Arriving in Japan, I was able to take a hot shower, get clean clothes, and enjoyed a good meal, and then I boarded a ship headed for California. From there I took a troop train to New York where I grabbed a cab from the train station to home.

As I opened the front door, I could smell the freshly brewed coffee; boy did it smell good.

On August 4, 1952, I was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army

~~*Nine*~~

Richard “Joe” Johannes

17th Infantry Regiment

7th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I dropped out of high school during my sophomore year. I was still living at home, and unable to find a job that paid anything, my dad began to get upset with me. So, I decided to join the Air Force. However, without a high school diploma, they wouldn't take me. This left me with only one choice—the U.S. Army. On April 10, 1951, at the age of seventeen, I enlisted in the Army. Due to my age my parents had to sign for me, which my father was all too happy to do.

Two days later, I left Denver, Colorado, via train, headed for Fort Ord, California. As I recall there were four of us and the trip took five days. We had Pullman berths, but we were issued army meal tickets for our food. With the prices being what they were, we ate omelets three meals a day.

When I enlisted, I was so thin I could have hidden behind a telephone wire—seriously. I arrived at Fort Ord weighing in at 118 pounds. I have to say, at the beginning of basic training I didn't know “come here” from “sic ‘em.” When marching, you always stepped off with your left foot. Needless to say, I caught hell for a while. Luckily, I had some guys who helped me a lot. Finally, about halfway through basic I got to where I could carry my own weight.

On the 5th of July, just ten days after the war started in Korea, I finished basic. Being issued an eleven day leave, I visited my family—in Denver. After my leave, I was to report to Camp Stoneman, California, which was a port of debarkation since World War II.

Instead of shipping out from San Francisco, the Army boarded us on a troop train—complete with mess hall—bound for Seattle, Washington. I can't recall how many days it took, but the views along the trip were

fantastic. Arriving at Naval Pier 91, to board ships, they took enough of us to fill a C-119 (Flying Boxcar) and loaded us on a bus. We were taken to McCord Air Force Base, to be flown to Japan. We flew to Japan via Anchorage, Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands.

After arriving in Japan we were taken to Camp Drake, which was the former home of the 1st Cavalry Division who had already been deployed to Korea. Being issued our gear, we went by the slowest train ever built to the base of Mt. Fuji where there was a large tent city. I don't recall what units were there, but I do know the entire 17th Infantry Regiment was there. Here I was assigned to the Heavy Mortar Company. However, being young and dumb, I walked up to an opened end of a tent that had the First Sergeants field desk blocking the entrance. I dropped my duffel bag, leaned over, and put my hands on the desk. The next thing I remember was picking my butt up from the middle of a dirt street, and was told in no certain terms to get my ass back to personnel—to get re-assigned. In my twenty-eight-and-a-half years in the Army, I never put my hands on a First Sergeants desk again. My new assignment was Item Company, 17th Infantry Regiment, where I stayed during my entire tour of Korea.

In each rifle squad we had three American soldiers and five or six Korean soldiers, which was both tragic and comical. Not being used to our rich food, the Koreans over ate and was sick a lot. Being smaller in stature, their boots didn't fit, and very few had ever held a rifle—let alone fired one. Then there was the language barrier.

While at Camp Fuji we trained for a couple of weeks during which time we were hit by a typhoon. Two other guys and myself rode it out in a one-and-a-half ton trailer. The wind spun us around numerous times, and we just knew it was going to turn us over. After the storm subsided, we exited the trailer to find a sight that was everlasting.

After collecting what we could of our gear, we loaded onto another one of those typical “slow moving” Japanese trains headed for the port of Yokohama. From there we headed for the port city of Pusan. The bad thing about Pusan was you could smell it before you saw it. It looked like you were floating in a cesspool; the harbor looked like raw sewage—which it was. Koreans, men and women, in small boats would come along side the ships too scoop up garbage that had been thrown overboard. After docking,

we disembarked for a four-or-five mile hike, to get our land legs back, and then we returned to the ship.

We then left Pusan in a huge convoy, headed for the invasion of Inchon. It was mid-afternoon when we reached the harbor at Inchon, and the Navy was still pounding the hell out of Inchon and the surrounding area. The concussion from the ships guns that were closest to us would vibrate our ship. Soon, we were ordered to get all of our gear and get into lines as we had practiced over and over. We then proceeded over the side and down the rope ladders to our waiting landing craft. My guess is we were roughly a thousand yards from shore. When we landed, there was a seawall about four feet high, which we had to scale. Through the years I have seen pictures of various landing sites at Inchon with no seawall. I don't know where the photographer took the picture, but he sure wasn't where we came ashore.

In my short seventeen years, I had never been to a funeral let alone seen a dead person. As we moved along a railroad track that would change—I saw my first dead person. Lying beside the track was a woman with a baby strapped to her back. Suddenly, realization hit me like a sledge hammer as I thought to myself, “Man what are you doing here—this is war. You should be in high school, not here.”

We mopped up around the southern part of Inchon and dug in on some high ground just outside the city. The 31st and 32nd Infantry Regiments, of the 7th Infantry Division, moved out toward Seoul.

On the second or third day we began to move almost due east, cutting off the escape routes of the NKPA. There were thousands of POW's, under American guard, being marched to POW compounds. It was our job to look for stragglers. We set up roadblocks and tried to check everyone. It became very difficult to pick out the refugees from the infiltrators.

After a time, we were sent to guard an interrogation enclosure for those suspected of aiding the North Koreans. It was a barbed wire area, so we had a clear view of all that was going on. My guard post was situated at the end of a bridge about fifty yards from the compound; across from me was an ROK soldier. Having to relieve himself, he went a short distance down a slope beside the bridge. While he was gone, an ROK officer (rank unknown) came looking for him. Finding him absent from his post, the

officer unholstered his pistol and shot the soldier dead. That scene is as vivid in my mind today as the day it happened.

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I cannot recall how we were transported south to Pusan, where we bivouacked north of the city. After replacing missing equipment, we were taken by truck to the docks and loaded onto LST's. Each of which carried a battalion and regardless of rank everybody was located on the deck. The only thing loaded in the holds was our vehicles.

We sailed up the east coast in very choppy seas, and men had become seasick. With limited latrine facilities, men were trying to hang over the sides to vomit, crap, or whatever else needed to be done. The deck became so slick from all the refuse, one could barely keep their footing; especially with the pitch and yaw of the boat. We didn't help our situation any by eating C-rations. Needless to say, we looked like hell, and felt worse.

Finally, we reached Iwon, North Korea. The crew of our LST ran the vessel aground, opened its doors, lowered the ramps, and discharged its stinking passengers. Luckily, we met no enemy resistance and as we walked through the sand we drug our feet, trying to get rid of the slime from our landing craft. There was nothing we could do about the rest of our condition.

We moved inland and quickly took up positions along a ridge line. For the next several days, we patrolled the surrounding area. During this time I went from being a rifleman to a platoon scout; this meant I was the first idiot out front. I held this job until February of 1951, and then I became a machine gunner.

As October drew to a close, the days and nights began to get colder. When the big push began we headed north to the Yalu River. As we traveled along the roads, we saw six men dressed in quilted clothing lying dead in a gully; we knew who they were—Chinese. They had been killed by artillery fire. However, we could not get anyone beyond battalion to believe us.

By this time the weather had turned miserable; it had turned colder, rain with snow mixed in, and fog. We were still wearing our warm weather gear. A few of us didn't have anything to keep us warm, our feet dry, or gloves for our hands—it would only get worse.

The 3rd BN had to be moved in a hurry, to the west, to join up with the rest of the regiment, so trucks were sent to pick us up. I don't recall how far we traveled, but it was fairly long with very few latrine breaks. At one point I had to relieve myself—badly. So, I sat on my helmet, on the wooden seat of the truck, and did what I had to do. When finished, I threw my helmet out the back of the truck. Needless to say, I wasn't the most popular guy on the truck. But I soon had company.

The further north we traveled, the snow became deeper and the mountains higher. Luckily, we had some tanks traveling with us, which could break a trail. Everything we needed was airdropped to us, gasoline, food, and ammo; everything except warm clothing. The mountains were so high, and because of their heavy cargo, the C-46's and C-47's had a difficult time getting enough altitude to make their drops. In fact, one plane crashed making its drop.

As we continued our journey we met sporadic resistance, which our tank gunners pretty much put a stop to. I remember walking along and as I looked down noticed a human foot that had been severed at the ankle. It was still in a rubber slipper that Koreans and Chinese wore, and still had rice straw wrapped around it for traction.

Our first view of the village of Hysenjin, the Yalu River, and the Manchurian border was from atop a mountain pass about three or four miles from the village. When we entered Hysenjin there were no civilians around. Nobody! When the command element figured out where each unit should be positioned—we settled in. At this time we were still wearing the same clothes we had on when we boarded the LST's in Pusan. The only thing we had been able to do along the way was to bathe in streams we passed on our way north. However, with the temperatures dropping liking it was, it was a hit and miss proposition.

The following morning Hysenjin was overrun by civilians; where they came from, I have no idea. There was a bridge that crossed the Yalu into Manchuria. We were not allowed to step on it or even point a weapon in the direction of Manchuria.

We enlisted the aid of the local women to wash our clothes. Except for removing the eggs of body lice, they did a good job. Having slept in several Korean homes along the way, we were all pretty lousy at that point. It

wasn't at all unusual to be sitting by a fire, trying to get warm, and feel a louse crawling up your neck trying to reach your hairline. When you caught one you threw it in the fire and just waited for it to expand, and then explode. We lived like this our entire tour of duty.

Some time before we entered Hysenjin we were issued winter sleeping bags, but not before the mercury reached zero. All we had prior to that was what we called a "mummy bag." Basically, that was just an OD wool blanket with a zipper sewn on it. At Hysenjin we were issued snow pack boots, which had rubber lowers, leather uppers, and an insole that went in the boot. However, when you perspired, the insole would freeze to the bottom of your socks. Needless to say, we didn't receive any additional socks. Most of us had two pair; we wore one pair and kept the other next to our bodies, so they would dry out. Now you can see why so many guys had trench foot, or frost bite.

Finally, we were clean and warm. As I recall, this lasted about three days. Item Company was the furthestmost company—on the west side of Hysenjin—and we were chosen to be a task force to go west and cut off any NKPA soldiers trying to escape into Manchuria. Along with three tanks from the 17th Tank CO., we moved out on Thanksgiving morning. We traveled only a few miles when the road became so narrow that the tanks couldn't move forward. So, we all just stood around—with our thumbs up our butts—until regiment decided what to do.

In the meantime, Thanksgiving Dinner was brought to us. It was close to dark and with the temperature dipping well below zero; the food froze about as fast as it was served. Most of us had long since discarded anything that wasn't vital to our survival, because of the extra weight. So, all we had was the bottom half of our mess kit and a spoon. I am not making light of this, but the spoon was as important as the weapon you carried; it was the only tool capable of getting frozen C-rations out of the can.

By now the tank crews had managed to back out two of their tanks, and headed back to Hysenjin. The other tank was still wedged in and unable to move. So, using thermite grenades, it was destroyed in place. We spent the night right there on the road, in plain view of the Chinese.

Early the next morning, we moved out. The snow was now deeper and the going was rough. I was still a scout at this time and the only opposition

we received was a single individual about three-hundred yards in front of me. He fired one shot and ran away as fast as he could.

Continuing on, we came to a place where there was a sheer cliff on one side and a drop-off to a river on the other side. Across the river was a small hut, where the door would fly open and either a North Korean or Chinese would spray us with burp-gun fire. We quickly returned fire and for some reason I was knocked backwards, into a ditch, when I fired my M-1. I don't know if we got him or not, but the shooting stopped.

Somehow I had jammed the muzzle of my rifle with snow, thus causing me to be knocked backwards when I fired it. I saw that one of our ROK soldiers had an M-1, so we traded. The M-1 I had was split open all the way back to the gas port.

Roughly two-hundred yards from here was a tunnel approximately two-hundred feet long, and at the front end it looked like there should have been a bridge over a tributary of the Yalu. There was a sharp incline, on the far side, where the ground leveled out for a few hundred yards. At the end was a village with a tower at one corner. As my squad topped the incline, and crossed the open, we began to take small arms fire from the tower. Equipped only with small arms ourselves, we charged forward running and firing. I was on the right flank and that was as far as I got.

Some time later, I woke up in a jeep trailer. Apparently I had been struck a glancing blow, above my left eye. Later, my platoon sergeant told me with all the blood he thought I was dead. I was taken back to the battalion aid station where I was treated. They kept me for two days to be sure I was okay—I had one hellish headache.

When I returned to Item Company it was late afternoon and they were getting ready for chow. Suddenly, word came to move-out immediately. All the mess hall equipment had been brought up and set up in the tunnel; we left everything and headed south. Can you believe it, we were going to have chocolate cake? I hope the bastards that got it enjoyed it as much as we would have. There was no need to worry about stragglers, because if you fell behind, "Charlie" had you. We took very few breaks.

We arrived at one place that had an overhead cable system—built by the Japanese—that was still operational. All the gear that we could do

without was loaded onto the cable cars, and sent over the mountain to Pungson—where we were headed.

When we arrived at Pungson, we found a narrow gauge train with enough flat cars to carry all of us. I don't remember how long it took us to get to Hamhung, but I was glad to be riding for a change. At Hamhung we were placed along a perimeter so the Marines could get out. After this was accomplished, we went south to the mountains that were just north of Hungnam.

The 3rd BN was deployed along a ridge line on both sides of a pass. Our platoon was selected to set up and man a roadblock at the base of the pass. My squad was placed on first watch, so we set up just before dark with four rifles, a BAR, and 3.5 rocket launcher. There was a house, with what we would call a privacy fence, approximately fifty-to-sixty yards from our position. Two other guys and myself pulled the first watch while the guys who had the second shift went in the house to get warm, and dry out their socks. I don't remember the time we were relieved, but I'm guessing it was around 2300 hours. We had just pulled our snowpacs and socks off when we heard a jeep stop at the roadblock.

A short time later—two to three minutes—we heard all hell break loose in the direction the jeep was headed. We scrambled to get dressed. It goes without saying, it was darker than dark. As we started out the door, guys from the roadblock ran past us heading up the hill towards Love Company—we were right behind them. By this time bullets were flying through the fence and over our heads as well. It sounded as though the entire Chinese army was shooting at us. Love Company quickly opened fire, and someone saved our butts by calling in mortar fire. By now we were wearing those heavy, long rayon coats with a liner—they must have weighed twenty pounds.

The following morning we found the occupants of the jeep, approximately two-hundred yards from the roadblock; all three were dead from multiple gunshot wounds as well as being badly beaten. The lieutenant's ring finger had been broken off—we assumed they took his ring. We had all seen casualties from gunshots, but never anyone that had been beaten.

This was the end of our roadblock duty.

We went back to the top of the pass, and took our place on the line. From our position we could look down on the beach at Hungnam. We could see that all the tanks and artillery pieces that had not been loaded aboard the ships had been placed hub-to-hub, in a semi-circle around the dock area. When I say hub-to-hub, they were less than ten yards apart. In the harbor was the battleship *Missouri*, along with ships equipped with smaller caliber guns. At night the *Missouri* fired 16 inch flares to illuminate the area for the artillery forward observers. The temperature was still hovering around thirty below zero, and the faintest light shown by the enemy was fatal for them. If they attempted to light a fire, it was usually their last act before meeting their ancestors.

We, the 17th, were next to the last infantry troops to board ships; the last being the 65th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division. After being very cold for so long, the heat and warmth of the ship was, and is, beyond description.

I have no earthly idea where we landed in South Korea, but when we debarked we were told that we could no longer burn buildings for the purpose of getting warm. The houses all had rice straw roofs, and they burned very well. We were just trying to help out by killing all the lice. By the way, we were all lousy to the max.

We then took a fairly short train ride—short in miles, long in hours. The morning after our arrival at our new positions, the entire regiment lined up according to company. What equipment we had was laid out in front of us as we stood for a Division Command Inspection. How absurd, considering what we had just come through!

I, and most of the other guys, had a weapon, cartridge belt, canteen (or at least the cup), mess kit with spoon, P-38 can opener, sleeping bag, and the clothes on my back—including lice. We were a pretty sad looking bunch of guys. Today as I look back on it—we looked defeated.

* * * * *

In early February, we were on a mountain pass above Wonju. The enemy was so close that the artillery was firing at maximum elevation. While we were holding the line, two full ROK divisions ran by us; they were bugging out. However, they were stopped a few miles down the road.

All their officers, and senior NCO's, were replaced and the division's were sent back to help defend Wonju. It was a major road junction that was still in UN hands, and had to be held.

Later in February we moved to the area of Hoensong. By this time I had become the 3rd platoon machine gunner. We fought several battles in the mountains around Hoensong. During one engagement, I was down behind my gun when I felt something hit my leg just below the knee. I started raising hell about somebody throwing rocks. It wasn't a rock; it was a bullet that didn't have enough velocity to penetrate the flesh.

By March we were in the vicinity of a small town called Tamani. We came down off a ridge line, crossed a narrow valley, and assaulted another ridge line to our front. It was heavily defended by the Chinese. We advanced approximately three-hundred yards before they pinned us down. I quickly set up my machine gun and began firing. Between me and the other two platoon machine guns, we were very effective. Incoming bullets were hitting so close in front of me, mud was splattering in my face. In times like these, a person will do dumb things; I cursed, yelled and kept on killing Chinese.

By now we were taking on mortar fire, which was very accurate. During the shelling I lost my foxhole buddy. A piece of shrapnel split his skull from front to back; we had been together from day one. I wonder to this day why he wasn't wearing his helmet. I helped carry him back across the valley, up the steep hill we had just come down that morning and down the other side to the aid station. It was a very sad trip.

I was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor for that action, but I would much rather have had my friend back. It took me several years to find out, but Trumansville, New York is the final resting place for Leo W. Maguire—my friend.

During the month of April, and up until I rotated home in late May, we were in the hills of Chorwon Valley. All headquarter elements were down in the valley and caught hell when the Chinese opened the flood gates on the dam located at the upper end of the valley. If flooding them wasn't enough, they also bombarded them with mortar fire.

One morning around 0200 hours, the shepherds horns started blowing, green tracers filled the air, and screams of "Banzai, Banzai" echoed in the

darkness; a definite sign of a human-wave attack. It had been awhile since we had one, but one is never prepared for it. Some of the Chinese were on Mongolian ponies pushing the foot soldiers that were in front of them. The 23rd Infantry Regiment was on our left flank and they were attacked the same time as us. At daylight we found bodies within twenty yard of us, explaining the number of hand grenades we had experienced during the night.

This was the last human wave attack I was involved in.

Toward the end of May I had earned the thirty-six points required to rotate home. Of the original guys, there were only four or five of us left. You had to be examined by the battalion surgeon to determine if you had any lice; hell everyone had lice. The doc said there was no way he was going to keep anyone in Korea because of lice.

I traveled by train to Pusan where I boarded a louse infested Japanese passenger ship to Sasebo, Japan. From here we took buses to the processing area. We went in one end of a long building, were told to strip naked, given a small draw string bag for what few valuables we had, given “about face,” and sent out the same door we came in. Up an embankment from this building was a hospital. Its windows were filled with American and Japanese nurses, shouting and whistling at us. Here we received an honest-to-goodness hot shower, and a thorough dusting with DDT.

My time in Korea was over.

~~*Ten*~~

Jack Anderson

38th Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was born on June 16, 1923, in Saco, Montana. Our family lived on a cattle ranch forty-nine miles south of Saco. However, after attending school by riding twelve miles on horseback, and spending the week away from home in a dormitory, the family moved to a farm four miles outside of Glasgow, Montana. Here I entered the seventh grade, and Bill—my older brother—started high school.

It was in Glasgow that an Army recruiter—a lean old sergeant who repelled a stack of silver dollars in his hand—made me want to be a soldier. I was too young to join, and mother wouldn't lie for me. He let me join the National Guard, so on December 8, 1938—at the age of fifteen—I enlisted in Company G, 163rd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Division.

On September 16, 1940 we were inducted into Federal Service, and went through training until March 19, 1942 when we boarded the *Queen Elizabeth*—in San Francisco. We docked at Sydney, Australia on the 6th of April, because Melbourne, our original destination, could not accommodate our ship. After disembarking, we were taken to Camp Seymour, which was a deserted World War I camp.

From January 1943 until September 2, 1945—V.J. Day—the 163rd was involved in the following campaigns: Port Moresby, New Guinea; Sananada-Kamusi; Aitape: Wakde Island; Biak Island; and the Philippines.

On August 15, 1944, I was given a Battlefield Commission to Second Lieutenant, and transferred to Company I, 186th Infantry Regiment, also of the 41st. Later, due to having run out of Second Lieutenants, I transferred to K Company.

Our division, along with eight others, was scheduled to take part in the invasion of Japan planned for November 1, 1945. However, the end of the war allowed us to enter Japan peacefully—as occupation troops.

We set foot on Japan on the 7th of September, with the 186th encamped in an old warehouse in Kaidaichi. The warehouse, which was crawling with fleas, took several days of dousing with DDT. It was located about four miles from the edge of the main drop zone—Hiroshima.

My platoon and I traveled through the rubble of Hiroshima each day to reach our assigned work area; we were in charge of destroying ammunition. As we walked around the city, we picked up debris. It's a wonder any of us lived for we did not wear any protective gear, nor did we have any. We were not aware that any was needed. You could use your fist to knock a hole through what concrete buildings were still standing.

We left Japan on the 13th of October, arriving in Portland, Oregon on the 11th of November.

* * * * *

While stationed at Fort Lewis, before I shipped out to Korea, I went down to Scappoose, Oregon to visit the Hallock family. They were friends of my parents and had left Montana before I was born. They had a daughter, Betty, who I began to date and proposed to before shipping out. We decided to wait until I returned home to get married. We gathered both families, and on December 16, 1945 we were married. We chose this date because I wanted to be in the service when we married, and I was scheduled to leave the Army on the 18th of December. However, that was pushed back to the 24th due to spending six days in the hospital with malaria.

* * * * *

On January 7, 1946, I re-enlisted and served with an engineering unit that processed and shipped soldiers to Europe. Then after doing stints in Fort Jackson, South Carolina and Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, I put in for a transfer with the Washington National Guard Instructor Group; which I received. I remained with them until I was reassigned to the 2nd Infantry Division—at Fort Lewis—when it was put on alert for shipment to Korea. War had broken out there on the 25th of June.

I was the Operations Sergeant for the 1st BN, 38th Infantry Regiment. We arrived in Korea on the 19th of August, and on the twentieth, we were being shot at; we were part of the Pusan Perimeter.

Korea was an unprepared mess, both in equipment and officers and soldiers. We lacked most everything in supplies, equipment, and ammo. Soldiers were ill-trained; some were using weapons they had never been trained with, and some had not fired a weapon in years. Most of the officers were self-serving, lacking the know-how and willingness to get the job done—unless they could do it from a foxhole. This was not the case with the units I served with during the Second World War.

* * * * *

During the fighting along the Pusan Perimeter, North Korean soldiers dressed as refugees crossed our lines. Once they were behind us, they assembled into small units attacking our rear areas such as hospitals, ammo dumps, and even our headquarters.¹

On the 18th of September, the 1st BN crossed the Nakdong River heading north. The rest of the 2nd Division passed through us on the 19th and 20th of September.

* * * * *

After being in constant contact—forty-eight straight days—with the enemy, the division went into reserve at Chonju, North Korea, on the 8th of October.² However, by the 2nd of November the 2nd Division found itself in the area of Kunu-ri and Suncheon, North Korea.³

By this time the weather had turned bitterly cold with temperatures dropping to ten below zero, and falling. We had no winter clothes, nor arctic type sleeping bags; our canteens and C-rations froze. On November 23rd, they tried to feed us a home style Thanksgiving Dinner. At this point the men's morale was low, because MacArthur had said troops would be eating Christmas Dinner at home; we knew this wasn't going to happen. During interrogation of some prisoners, it was learned that Chinese forces had crossed the Yalu; however, we couldn't get the upper echelon to believe it.

The following morning, the Eighth Army began its drive to the Yalu River.

* * * * *

On the twenty-seventh, orders came down for the 2nd Division to withdraw. However, the 38th was to hold at all cost while the rest of the division withdrew southward. We were to withdraw to Kujang-dong, which was an important road junction north of Kunu-ri. The following day, the 9th and 23rd—our other two regiments—suffered heavy losses in both men and equipment.⁴

By the twenty-ninth the situation in Kunu-ri had become perilous. The next day the division was given the okay to withdraw, so we headed south towards Sunchon—going through the Gauntlet and The Pass. This was two days of hell.

We had been under constant attack since the 24th of November, losing 546 men. By the end of December 2nd, we had lost another 632 men.⁵

We were able to finally stop at the Hoengsong-Wonju (South Korea) area, where we received a much needed rest, and received replacements in both men and equipment—in preparation to head north again.

Around mid-December, the 38th received a battalion of Dutch soldiers. On New Years Day 1951, I walked to their CP to visit with their S-3 section. As I walked through the snow that had fallen the day before, I noticed oblong humps along the sides of the road. Thinking my eyes were playing tricks on me, I went over to one of the humps and kicked away the snow; it was a mother holding her baby. The humps were too numerous to count.

* * * * *

We had moved up to Hoengsong, and by the 10th of February we were receiving aerial reports that thousands of Chinese forces had been spotted to our front. The following day we saw little gain on the front, and as we came under fire, we had to try and stop the ROK troops from leaving—we were unsuccessful.

As our tanks were pushing stalled vehicles off the road, their turret gunners were taking a beating; they were using their 76mm cannon as direct fire weapons. Our ammo supply had gotten so low, that our rear guard—Company A—was down to fixed bayonets.⁶

By the twelfth, personnel from BN HQ Company had been organized and placed on the line. Along with a few staff members, Burr, and myself got off the road to set up a temporary CP. A call came in from Major Blackwell telling us that the lead truck had stopped and was under continuous fire from a machine gun that was located on a ridge line to their left. He wanted troops sent to knock out the gun. So, Burr and myself said we would take care of it; there was no objection from the major.

Master Sergeant Guenther Burr was our S-2, Intelligence Sergeant, and I must say, a very good one.

We organized the members of our temporary CP into an assault team, with Burr and myself as the lead. With little trouble, we knocked out the machine gun; however, we didn't know there was a second machine gun further up the ridge. Suddenly, lead and grenades were flying everywhere until I took a slug to my head, which rolled me down the hill. Burr rolled down the hill with me to see how bad I was hit.⁷

As he raised up to check my wound, a burst of machine gun fire opened up on us; Burr was nicked in the shin, grazed in the forearm, and had his carbine destroyed. So, we rolled further down the hill, where he was able to dress my wound. Suddenly, six Chinese soldiers appeared motioning for us to follow them—we had no other choice. As they marched us across the road, to an open field, we heard the rest of our team silence the second gun. Now the column of vehicles were able to move.⁸

We finally joined up with a group of seventy to eighty prisoners, most of who were not wounded. Then we moved south to Chongbong-ni, where we joined another group of prisoners that was about the size of our group. That evening Burr was able to get a better look at my wound, which was still bleeding. I had been hit in the left corner of my mouth, with the bullet passing through my cheek, and jawbone, exiting out the back of my neck. He took a piece of an old Korean blanket and stuffed it in the hole in my neck—the bleeding stopped.

A few days later we came under an aerial attack and five guys—including Burr and myself—walked away from the group. Unfortunately, we were caught and taken back to the group. Later, we would make a second attempt of escaping; this time we had a better plan. We would walk down the road, in the open, telling the enemy that we had been released to

go back and tell the Americans to stop fighting the Chinese, because they were good people. As we got close to the front lines, we could hear shooting in the distance, a squad leader stopped us and he didn't believe our story. So, he had some men take us back.

After being back a few days, they began to divide our group, which had grown to about two-hundred men. They divided us in two groups; those who could, and couldn't walk. Burr was placed in the group of those able to walk; I was placed in the other. Before the first group was moved north, Burr came by to say good-bye and to give me his fiancée's address—in case he didn't make it home. I never saw Burr again.

It had stopped snowing, and as it began to get dark, the healthy group started their journey north. As we sick were left behind, four soldiers remained to guard us. In our group there were twenty-eight men, including myself, who wanted to escape. The guards left to go cook their meal and they had not returned when darkness came, so we got up and walked away.

After traveling several days, I began to hemorrhage and had lost a lot of blood before I could get the bleeding under control. Just before daylight, a small group came to where I was and told me the group had talked it over and they were going to leave me. I told them to wait for daylight before they left, then told them good-bye and wished them luck.

Due to being weak, I fell asleep. Later, I heard footsteps as they approached and stopped next to me; I knew the Chinese had found me. Luckily for me, it was a guy from L Company—Joe Dorshefski. He informed me that Bill Mashburn and he had stayed behind.

Around noon, we decided to leave. As we neared a river, the "Gooks" began to shoot at us from a ridge. With Bill and Joe on each side of me, into the river we went. Lucky for us, across the river was a Marine outpost. Once they noticed we were being shot at, they sent out a patrol to get us—we were safe.

To my knowledge, none of the other twenty-five men were ever heard from again.

We were taken to a collection station where I underwent surgery to connect three severed arteries in my neck. From there I was flown by helicopter to a M.A.S.H. unit. After a brief stay, I went to the Tokyo Army Hospital and was treated by Colonel Childs. From the Tokyo Army

Hospital, I ended up at Letterman Army Hospital—in San Francisco—where I stayed for seven months.

* * * * *

A short time after being released from Letterman, Betty and I went to Gillespie, Texas. Here we visited with Hetty—Burr's fiancée. Some years later, Guenther A. Burr showed up on the casualty list as having been captured and dying on July 15, 1951—from non-battles causes.

* * * * *

After serving my country for twenty-four years, four months, and twenty-three days, I retired from the U.S. Army.

~~*Eleven*~~

Dillon Staas

8055 M.A.S.H.

U.S. Army

Land of the Morning Calm

Dillon Staas

*Oh gentle, loving people of the land of morning calm,
Hold sacred your new freedom, and listen to my psalm.
The seed of many nations came from far across the sea,
And paid a price on your behalf, for freedom isn't free.
The gripping fear, the stench of death, no longer fill your mind,
The horrors of the battlefield have all been left behind.
Your children, dreaming peaceful dreams, safe in your arms each night,
Wake with a smile of innocence, to face the morning light.
Your homes, secure, on quiet streets, bring comfort to the soul,
From verdant hillside terraces to valleys down below.
Your mountain streams, now running clear, without a trace of red,
No sound you hear, no crying, from the dying, and the dead.
So when good fortune smiles on you and fills your heart with cheer,
Remember those who fought and died and left their futures here.
Give thanks to them and make a special place within your heart,
That you and they, forever friends, shall never drift apart.*

When I arrived in Pusan, in August 1950, the hospital was set up in a school of some kind. Each afternoon the hospital train would come in from the

front with its load of wounded. We had a Philippine ambulance company attached to us and they would go to the train station and relay the patients to us. We unloaded the wounded at the front door and triage would send them to the proper ward, or holding area. The ambulances could handle five litters per load, and we received one-hundred to three-hundred men a day.

I remember lying on my cot in Taegu, just before the Inchon Landing, and watching the shells explode on the side of the mountain just across the Naktong River. Later, when we broke out I saw the results of the shelling along the road. There were countless tanks, trucks and artillery pieces that had been blown to pieces, along with many North Korean bodies, which hadn't been picked up for burial yet.

The massacre in Taejon was the most horrible thing I could have imagined. There were seven thousand dead civilians in an area of about two acres, or so. There were forty Americans and five-hundred South Koreans among them, all of whom had been captured and were being held in Taejon. Most of the civilians were the elderly, women and small children. It looked like everyone who was able had gone to seek refuge, and the old, the infirm, and those with children too small to travel were left behind to be killed by the retreating North Korean troops. The bodies were starting to decompose, and I can't describe the odor. A Korean family was digging a grave for a young woman and several family members were gathered around crying, as a man placed her in the ground. Many GI's became ill, and others cried. I was too stunned to do anything. I didn't cry at the time, but I cry about this often—now.

On our way north, out of Seoul after the breakout of the Pusan Perimeter, we saw many refugees walking up one side and down the other side of the road with an A-frame loaded with all they could carry of their most necessary belongings. We wondered how many really were displaced people and how many were North Korean soldiers trying to escape to the north, or infiltrate to the south.

North of Pyongyang, just before the Chinese entered the war, a black captain came walking into the hospital compound with a chest wound. He had been shot by one of his own men with a .45 caliber grease gun. They said it was an accident, but many weren't.

In the winter, soon after the Chinese entered the war, we were in Pyongyang and a Graves Registration truck stopped in to have lunch, and pick up bodies from our morgue. The two-and-a-half ton truck was open and piled high with frozen bodies of dead GI's. They were just as they had been picked up from the field with limbs sticking out in every direction. I remember worrying that their frozen fingers, ears, and other parts that could break off and be lost. I doubt that those guys would have cared. Later, I felt stupid for worrying about their body parts breaking off.

We had a Chinese prisoner who had been shot through the chest by an M-1 rifle. His flesh was puffy like a sponge, but he was walking around and actually happy to be there (as a prisoner). I guess anything was better than being back in battle.

There was another prisoner who had lost his left eyeball. There were maggots crawling in and out of the socket. I had never seen them used before, but the Chinese doctors used them routinely.

We had a man come in with something like eleven GSW's (Gun Shot Wounds) all over his body, and he had developed gangrene. The doctors thought that he was a goner, and they put him out in the hall to prevent the gangrene from spreading to other patients, while he took his time to die. He was still alive after three days, so they took him back to surgery and cleaned him out. As far as I know, he may be still alive. He at least made it past our place anyway. We had a survival rate of ninety-eight percent for the wounded who arrived alive. That was a new record for wounded making it past the battalion aid stations.

We were usually located near an airstrip, and we "midnight requisitioned" supplies from them often. One night we were getting some good mountain sleeping bags, to replace the thin blanket type we had been issued, when one of the guys tried to pick up a bag with a guard sleeping in it. We traded him a quart of medical alcohol (190 proof) for the bags and he went about his business, and we ours.

Another time we were stealing gasoline, and heating oil, from a rail car when someone threw a spotlight on us and yelled "hands up," or something like that. It was a supply captain and he told us that his men had a twin-50 on a ring mount—on top of a six-by-six truck—and they were about to let loose on us when he came up. He let us keep what we had off the car, so we

kept warm and cozy for a few days. The oil kept freezing in the lines and we could only heat the tents in the afternoons when it warmed up enough for the oil to flow. I slept with my clothes on and my head turned away from the opening of my bag. If we turned to face the hole, we could have woken up with a black, frostbitten nose.

Our chances of being able to hold on in Korea seemed pretty dark for a time, but we did hold and soon had a firm grip on the southern part of the peninsula. The unit moved back as far as Uijongbu, a few miles north of Seoul, and stayed there until I rotated home. I understand that they remained in that location until the end of the fighting.

~~*Twelve*~~

Lloyd Paul Summers

5th Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

After graduating from Waynesboro High School, in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, in 1948, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps.

It was the summer of 1950, and Eugene—my brother who was also in the Marines—and I were both home on leave. Gene was stationed at Great Lakes Naval Air Station and I at Dover, New Jersey. Our parents took us to Washington D.C., to watch a baseball game at Griffith Stadium. Our team—the Yankees—were playing. As we were leaving the stadium, there stood a young boy selling newspapers, barking, “Extra, read all about it—Marines called to Korea.” Gene and I turned and looked at each other. When we returned home, he had a telegram—I didn’t. Needless to say, I was disappointed.

Gene shipped over with the whole division, and they flew me over later—in August. Arriving in Masan, South Korea as part of the first replacement draft, I was assigned to G Company, 3rd BN, 5th Marine Regiment. However, I did arrive in time to participate in the second battle of the Naktong River.

* * * * *

On the morning of September 15th, the 3rd BN of the 5th Marines assaulted the island of Wolmi-do—beginning the Inchon Invasion.

While were in reserve, on the seventeenth, a lieutenant said they needed a platoon to go down to a village where some North Korean guerrillas had chased the villagers from their homes. I had a BAR and we went through all the houses and were ready to leave when someone said that we had better check out the backyard; what a mistake. Walking

between two houses, I was the first to enter the backyard. There was something like a wheat field about fifty to one-hundred yards in front of me. As I scanned the area, I didn't see anything.

Suddenly, another Marine pointed in front of me and said, "There's one." As soon as I turned to look, I saw a North Korean—in his brown uniform—sit down. I sprayed the area, and then all hell broke loose. The bullets were so close, I could hear them crackle as they flew by me. I quickly dropped, and as I was going down it felt as though I had brushed against a tree limb. It began to hurt, then I noticed there was no tree—I had been hit. I remember someone saying that where the bullet came out, one could bleed to death—I began to panic.

Luckily for me, the bullet entered my right shoulder and went down my back; it never came out. They had us pinned down, and I laid there for about forty-five minutes before two Marines came and dragged me to the street. Here a corpsman gave me a shot of morphine, and a miniature bottle of brandy. Not wanting to be a hog, I only took a sip. The corpsman told me to "Kill it!" which I did. After a brief stay on a hospital ship, I was transferred to Japan where they removed the bullet.

While recovering in Japan, they put us through drills everyday. We had grown very tired of this, so they started a rumor about needing volunteers to sign-up for guard duty in the Philippines or Alaska. After we signed the petition, the next morning we were all marched to warehouse and given weather gear; big, OD parkas that hung below the knees. We had made a mistake. They loaded us onto a boat, and the next thing we knew we were landing in North Korea. We were told that the Marines were headed north to the Yalu River. Also, that the Marines were to set up defensive positions, then we would be relieved by the Army and we would be going to Japan.

When we arrived in a valley before reaching the Chosin Reservoir, it was snowing and the temperature was falling. They said the temperature was thirty-to-fifty below zero.

It was the night before the Chinese hit us, and I had just laid down for the first time. With our rifles between us, my buddy and I got into my sleeping bag. We had been told not to keep a round in the chamber, but I did—I wanted to be ready. However, I did keep the safety on.

Before crawling into the bag, I took off my “Mickey Mouse” boots. I guess it was between 1:30 or 2:00 AM when suddenly the shooting started, along with some mortar fire. A Marine came running through the snow yelling for everyone to get up, the Chinese were coming. Due to my hands being frozen, I could not get my boots tied, so I just pulled them up. Without knowing it, I grabbed my buddy’s rifle.

They told us—George Company—to quickly form a skirmish line. The Chinese were coming over a hill, which we were ordered to take and hold. As we started up, the Chinese were throwing percussion grenades at us; one of which picked up my foxhole buddy, and threw him to the ground. I shook his foot and when he didn’t respond, I thought he was dead. However, he had just been knocked unconscious.

When we reached the top, it was beginning to get daylight. I noticed smoke, as if it were coming from a campfire, but there were no flames. As it got lighter, I noticed large mounds everywhere; they were dead Chinese. The warm blood flowing in the cold snow was the source of the smoke.

At the Chosin Reservoir, the Chinese had us outnumbered by fifteen-to-one. When word came for us leave, we had to fight our way out. And guess who was given the task of rear guard? George Company!

While we were on top of the hill, word came down for us to hold at all cost, so the rest of the division could start moving south towards Hagaru-ri. They informed us when word came for us to leave, for us to throw all the grenades we had down the hill, into the valley. I had about six-or-seven, and we had them—plus my buddies—lined up around our foxhole. A grenade has about a seven second fuse, which I usually held until the count of four.

The following morning, Corsairs dropped napalm on the Chinese—killing hundreds. While we were sitting in our foxhole, a Corsair swooped down towards us. My buddy said, “He’s going to shoot us. He thinks we’re Chinese.” At that moment, the pilot let his rockets go—we could see them coming. We quickly covered our heads and one exploded close to us, spraying shrapnel. A piece missed my knee by four-or-five inches.

Word finally came; getting rid of our hand grenades we quickly exited our foxhole, and ran down the hill—tripping in the snow. We had no more than got off the hill, when the Chinese started lobbing white phosphorus mortars all over the hill.

The next day we started down the road to Hagaru-ri and didn't get very far—there was a roadblock. The Chinese were on a hilltop firing down on us. We received word that if the division didn't get through the roadblock by afternoon, then we would have to clear the hill the following morning. When morning came, the men of George Company fixed their bayonets and started up the hill. We hadn't gotten very far when the Chinese opened up on us with small arms fire, and machine guns; I hit the ground. Word quickly spread for us to lay out our air panels, which were bright red, orange, and yellow—they were sending a night fighter.

We could hear him coming, and I thought to myself, "I hope he doesn't miss." When he dropped his five-hundred pound bomb, it shook the whole hill. After that, I thought nothing could be alive on the hill—wrong. As soon as we topped the hill, they opened up on us again. So, they dropped a second bomb; this time all the trees were blown to pieces.

It was foggy that morning and I noticed a huge, well built, bunker, but saw no enemy. With grenade ready, I set my sights on the bunker. As I was about to throw it, from inside a voice said, "Don't shoot. There's Marines in here." Inside were four dead Marines, and one that had half of his nose blown off; he was the one yelling. Apparently, the Chinese must have thrown their bodies in there after they overran their position.

Upon reaching the top, there must have been hundreds of dead Chinese lying everywhere. They were the best dressed Chinese I had ever seen. One soldier was wearing a white cap with a red star in the front. He was also wearing shoes with gold spikes on the bottom.

We finally made our fifteen-to twenty mile journey to Hagaru-ri, which was where Chester Puller's CP was located. Upon our arrival, we were checked by doctors. If your wound or frostbite was severe enough, you were flown out by plane. Due to frostbite, I was flown out on the next to last plane to leave Hagaru-ri.

After staying in Japan for a few days, I was flown to Bethesda Naval Hospital—where I arrived on Christmas Eve.

~~Thirteen~~

Robert “BJ” Johnson

7th Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

After graduating from Lincoln High School, in Tacoma, Washington, in 1948, I joined the Marine Reserves. I had been influenced by their reputation, plus I would have a chance for travel and a little extra cash from weekend drills.

It was 1950; I had a job, fiancée, car, and in general, was enjoying life. So, when my enlistment was up in May, I immediately re-enlisted for another tour. Then came June 25, 1950; the Korean War. I was among the Tacoma reservist unit that was activated in July.

On the morning of August 9, 1950, our train left the Tacoma Union Station heading south—for Camp Pendleton, California. Here we joined units from all across the United States for assignment. Needless to say, I was headed for Korea.

We sailed aboard troopships and due to a typhoon, the voyage was rough. A lot of heavy equipment broke loose, and many men experienced seasickness. After a short stop in Japan, we finally arrived in Korea.

During my tour in Korea, I wrote over three-hundred letters to my fiancée—now wife. These are excerpts from some of those letters.

Tacoma, Washington

August 9, 1950

Though I’m only about ten miles away from Tacoma, I’m writing already. Writing letters on a train is like threading a needle on a roller coaster....

Camp Pendleton, California

August 11, 1950,

We're finally here. We arrived at 1:00 PM this afternoon...They put us in barracks temporarily, overnight I guess. Then we will be moved to our permanent ones...Gordy [brother-in-law] sleeps underneath me with his head under my feet...

Camp Pendleton, California

August 13, 1950,

...We had to sign up for insurance and get classified. I think I will be in Motor transport. I hope so anyway...Most everyone went to get a beer or two. I'm staying here and packing my sea bag so I'll be ready to move out when the word comes...

Camp Pendleton, California

August 15, 1950,

Today is payday. Everybody got fifty dollars...Today they separated the guys with over a year and a half of reserve training from the rest. That's a bad sign. Some of the reserves that arrived before we did already shipped out. I hope we aren't next in line...

Camp Pendleton, California

August 16, 1950,

Damn! Another day and we're still here...

Camp Pendleton, California

August 28, 1950,

Just finished washing clothes, not my own but someone else's for a dollar. Good business... We're expecting to leave any time, any day now. Just waiting for the word.

Camp Pendleton, California

August 29, 1950,

It's 2:30 PM and I'm writing you now as I don't think I'll have time tonight. We were issued our 782 gear today, rifles, packs, rolls, etc....

Camp Pendleton, California

August 31, 1950,

We're leaving tomorrow so am very busy packing all my gear. Tomorrow morning I will call you before I leave and tell you so long (not good-bye).

USS Bayfield

September 3, 1950,

Here I am, three days out and just getting time to write. It seems I just can't get away from that darn mess duty. I seem to get elected every time...We're on the *USS Bayfield*, heading toward the Far East, I guess. It's suppose to take us fourteen days and sixteen nights, figure it out...I really heard some sad news the first day out. I was informed that my name wasn't on the roster and I wasn't supposed to be on the ship. It seems they gave me the wrong word and I was supposed to be transferred to an outfit in main camp but here I am, too late to turn back now. What a revolting development this turned out to be!

September 18, 1950,

It's getting closer to K day all the time, about 48 hours from now. Everyone tries to put on that it's nothing at all but they're all scared. Including me.

Inchon, Korea

September 25, 1950,

I'm in motor transportation driving a jeep and am very busy. We are only about half a mile from the front lines and have to watch out for sniper fire. Life is really rugged over here. All there are is over sized cow trails and the dust is two feet deep on all of them. It's awfully hot during the day (106 degrees) and gets down to about 34 degrees at night...We can't sleep because of the enemy infiltrating so I'm very tired. So is everyone else. A few of the guys have been killed or injured all ready while out on patrols...

September 28, 1950,

I've been on the go for about 72 hours with only about four hours of sleep so am sort of tired. We're only two miles from Seoul and the snipers are pretty thick here. Last night I was driving a jeep down to Inchon on the beach and the snipers pinned me, and my shotgun rider down for half an hour till a truck full of Marines came and helped us out. They put two bullet holes through my windshield and that was too close for comfort...

October 8, 1950,

Yesterday we arrived in Inchon, again, to get ready to board ships...I had a gook wash my clothes for me yesterday in exchange for chop chop (food)...

USS Pickaway

October 12, 1950,

We finally got aboard ship today. We are on the *USS Pickaway*, the same kind as the *Bayfield*...I had a hot shower and a cold one, shaved, and combed my hair and brushed my teeth, then I put on some clean clothes. So did everyone else

and when we got through doing all these things, we hardly knew each other, as we looked so different...

October 13, 1950,

We're still sitting out in the harbor, if you want to call it that.

At Sea

USS Pickaway

October 17, 1950,

Today we finally left Inchon. We left at 6 this morning and soon after found out our destination. It is Wonson, on the east coast of North Korea...We aren't alone, as we are in the middle of close to a twenty ship convoy...the North Koreans send over a plane, or so, every once in awhile just to antagonize the Navy...

October 25, 1950,

We finally arrived at Wonson today but we arrived too late to start getting the troops off so I guess we'll spend another night aboard...Is it ever cold over here. The sun was out all day but there's a thirty mile an hour wind blowing and colder than h---, so I practically froze...The "Mighty Mo" is sitting right beside us—what a battleship! It makes this ship look like a rowboat. There are quite a few ships here, but it stands out like the Statue of Liberty. I wish I had a camera...

North Korea

October 27, 1950

I finally got off the ship about 2 PM and what a time we had! The landing boat couldn't go all the way to the beach so we had to drive our jeep through the water and we didn't quite make it. The water was a little too deep and we sank. There we sat with our heads above water. I got out of the jeep and

hooked a cable on the jeep to an amtrak and he pulled us out. I practically froze as it was about 32 degrees and I had to stay in the wet clothes for a couple of hours...I had to stand guard by myself last night. Now I have a good cold. Worse than that we're moving 90 miles north earlier this afternoon or tomorrow, so it'll be colder yet...

November 2, 1950

...We're getting into the mountains now and colder all the time...Since we're just a few miles from the front (60 miles from the Manchurian border) we can't have any lights or fires after dusk...

November 6, 1950,

...The enemy had our CP zeroed in with mortar and artillery all night long and really raised hell around here. We lost two jeeps and three trucks but luckily no men were hurt...

November 9, 1950,

...The 7th Regiment is getting ready for a big push in the next few days, eighteen trucks and a lot of heavy artillery are coming up today. Our object is to take a large reservoir about 10 miles from where we are now and being in the mountains we need a little support since the Chinese are a lot better equipped than the North Koreans...

November 16, 1950,

It's been so cold it's been impossible to write, 20 degrees below zero at night and never warmer than 20 degrees above during the day. The fellows were so cold they were crying. About 200 cases of frostbite turned into sickbay...are now at the southern tip of the reservoir...

During our withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir to Hungnam, I didn't write Arlee any letters. Due to the daily, intense fighting there wasn't any time to write, let alone get any mail. Even if there had been time to write, it would have been impossible to hold a pin in the thirty below zero weather.

Evacuation

December 12, 1950,

...Right now we are at the seaport of Hungnam, about 20 miles from Hamhung. We are going aboard ships, I guess headed for Pusan...I got some sleep last night, the first in a long time, so now all I want is a shower and a change of clothes...It was worse than hell up there.

Pusan, Korea

December 14, 1950,

We arrived in Pusan early this morning...

Masan, Korea

December 17, 1950,

...Right now the 1st Division is so small they fed all of us in one mess hall...Maybe the 2nd Division will relieve us, they are in North Carolina, or at they least they were.

They say there's 80,000 Marines there. 20,000 would take our place and still leave plenty. "Dug out Doug" seems to want us to stay here tough.

Masan, Korea

January 2, 1951,

It looks like we are going to move up in a few days, about 150 miles...

Masan, Korea

January 17, 1951,

...This "police action" is like a football game. First one side pushes the other back, then the tide turns...Where we're going the showers are just across the street and boy am I heading for that as soon as we get settled! I haven't had a chance for a shower since we disembarked from the ship in Pusan. Taking a bath in a helmet is quite an ordeal...

January 20, 1951,

We heard today that everyone serving in Korea might get a fifty dollar a month bonus retroactive to when they arrived over here...

February 14, 1951,

...We may be moving north in a short time either to Pusan or Pyongyang...

February 17, 1951,

Just finished filling out my 1950 tax return...

March 23, 1951,

...Last night one of the larger buildings here in camp burned and we were ordered to get up before three AM and standby in case it spread to other buildings as a bush wind was blowing and the gasoline dump is right beside where we sleep. It was raining sparks but we covered all the gas with large tarps and doused them in water so nothing happened. We stayed up the rest of the night and worked all day (that terrible word) removing the mess where the building stood...

April 10, 1951,

...You asked if I knew anything about what happened to Norman Johnson [buddy from home]. We're not supposed to write anything about what happened to anyone over here, but the letters aren't censored. As far as I know he's missing in action. He was in the infantry when we were trapped up north and no one saw him after we got out. He was either killed or captured as far as I know...This is just between you and me.

Pusan, Korea

May 4, 1951,

I've been here about six hours and I'm ready to go back to Masan. This place is located just south of the refuse dump and there is a strong wind blowing from the north. What a terrible odor! The natural smell of Korea is bad enough but this is worse...

Masan, Korea

May 17, 1951,

...The middle of May and again I, with everyone else, starts hoping they'll make the June draft...But the odds are greatly increased on being selected as now there remains only six-thousand of the original division over here and there will be around three-thousand leaving in June.

May 21, 1951,

...Today's the twenty-first—exactly eight months in this place, much too long...

July 2, 1951,

Looks like the communists are going to cooperate this time on a cease fire in Korea. Talks start next week, between the

10th and 15th of July...

July 29, 1951,

I thought I was in rear-echelon...far from the fighting front. Well, after last night I'm wondering. We had an attack by communist guerrillas, around a hundred of them. It didn't last long but while it lasted, rounds were flying all over the place...

August 28, 1951,

Remember that poem I finished my last letter with? I guess it paid off cause I'm not sweating it out any longer—I made the list!...

September 4, 1951,

Here I am in Pusan, here for the last time! I'm not going to have tears in my eyes when I have to leave here...We're going on the *USS General Mitchell*, a large troopship...

USS Mitchell

September 20, 1951,

We're out here somewhere close to San Francisco but we can't tell, we're in a dense fog. The fog is so thick you can't see from one end of the ship to the other. Scuttlebutt has us close to the Farallone Islands, not too far from the entrance to San Francisco Bay. We know land is close because we can smell it and there are more seagulls flying around. Everyone has a bet down as to when we'll land. I'm on deck like everyone else waiting in anticipation of seeing something.

I just looked up and there was the bottom of the Golden Gate Bridge.

I'm home!

I'll call you collect as soon as I can get to a phone.

Thank goodness, Arlee's sister—Barbara—worked for the phone company and she was able to get us a 50 percent discount. So, for the next fourteen days our bill came to seventy dollars. I stayed in San Francisco until the 3rd of October, so in the meantime my aunt and uncle wined and dined me. They even took me to the Stanford homecoming football game against California.

I left San Francisco on the 3rd of October, and arrived in Tacoma the following afternoon. Standing in the same place where Arlee and I said our goodbyes in August of 1950—stood Arlee. What a joyous homecoming!

On October 20, 1951, Arlee Curtice and I were married.

I was separated from active service on February 19, 1952, and received my final discharge from inactive service on July 18, 1958.

~~*Fourteen*~~

Carroll Everist

5th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

I was born in Mason City, Iowa on September 8, 1931. And at the age of seventeen I volunteered for the Iowa National Guard, which was divided in two different sections—Army or Air Force. I chose the Army National Guard. I received training at the Armory with summer training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

When I turned eighteen, I requested—on September 14, 1949—a transfer to the U.S. Army. Being granted my request, I dropped out of school. However, I eventually took the military GED test.

After completing basic training at Camp Funston, Kansas, which was part of Fort Riley, I reported for duty at Camp Carson, Colorado. Here I became a member of the 14th RCT, and received skiing and mountain training. While I was stationed here, war broke out in Korea. We had to ship out quickly, so we were not given furloughs to visit our families.

We boarded a troop train, which had a guard at each door, and headed for Camp Stoneman, California. During the first part of August we left Camp Stoneman, to board the *General Pope*. During our fifteen day voyage we ran into two storms, which made me seasick. We were supposed to have stopped in Japan for more training; however, our orders were changed—straight to Korea. They also told us we would be home by Christmas.

After docking in Pusan, Korea, we disembarked and waited for our orders. We were taken to the train station, not far from the docks, and loaded onto a train. Armed with a carbine rifle, I couldn't help but wonder where we were headed. The train took us to the Naktong River, where we were rushed into position—the Pusan Perimeter.

The 14th RCT would now be broken up, with one battalion being assigned to each of the three regiments of the 1st Cavalry Division—the 5th, 7th, and 8th. I was assigned to Company L, 3rd BN, 5th Cavalry Regiment. Our BN CO was Lt. Colonel Edgar Treacy, Jr., a West Point graduate of the class of 1935; he was our commander at Camp Carson. Captain Perry was CO of L Company, and his executive officer was Lt. Dixon Rodgers.

Our platoon sergeant with the 14th RCT Sgt. John Rice, was assigned to Company A, 8th Cavalry Regiment. On September 6, 1950, he was killed in action.

We were always on full alert during the fighting along the Nakdong. To help us stay awake, we broke open Vicks inhalers and mixed the Benzedrine—in them—with chewing gum. However, after chewing this for several days, it almost cost me my life. I finally went to sleep—a deep sleep—and during an attack by the North Koreans, my platoon sergeant was unable to wake me. We were not at the Nakdong very long before we started moving north.

As we moved north we were on Hill 174, which had an orchard at the bottom; we were told to leave our packs there. While we were on the hill, we lost five men. Cpl. Carl Cook raised his head above the skyline only to be shot—just above the eyes—by a sniper. Captain Perry was also mortally wounded. A shell took out our machine gunner, and his assistant. Immediately my foxhole buddy and I manned the machine gun. On the 13th of September, five days after my nineteenth birthday, my enlistment was up; however, I had been called back to active duty.

We lost the hill and when we retook it, we found some of our men with their hands tied behind their backs—shot and butchered. Before leaving, we had lost and retaken Hill 174 at least three times.

As we continued our northward journey we finally reached, and took, the city of Pyongyang—the capital of North Korea. During our stay there we were able to shower, shave, and have our clothes washed. Needless to say, our morale was also improving.

Finally, we left Pyongyang continuing north when we were told that the Chinese had entered the war—this changed everything. However, we were unaware of what was happening with the Marines and the 7th Infantry

Division at the Chosin Reservoir. During this time I became the mail clerk—lucky for me. I kept this job until February of 1951, when I became a member of Task Force Crombez.

* * * * *

At Chipyeong-ni, the Chinese had surrounded the 23rd Infantry Regiment (2nd Infantry Division), a French Battalion, a Ranger Company, and an engineer company. On the 14th of February Colonel Crombez, CO of the 5th Cavalry Regiment, received orders for the 5th to go to their aid. Crombez decided to take twenty-three tanks, from the 6th and 70th Tank BN's, and have a company of infantrymen ride on them. This task fell to L Company, to which Lt. Col. Treacy expressed his opposition. However, Crombez had his way. Men riding on top of tanks! What an easy target.

As we neared Chipyeong-ni, the enemy fire became more intense. I was shot in the knee and for some reason, the tanks stopped. So, I quickly dismounted to seek cover, and return fire. However, due to my wound, I had no mobility—I wasn't of much use. More men began to dismount seeking cover. Suddenly, the tanks took off, leaving us behind. Several of us were wounded, including Lt. Col. Treacy. Shortly after, we were all captured.

Not having an aid pouch, the colonel gave me his. Being unable to walk, he carried me on his back. The colonel had been shot in the mouth. The Chinese took one of the guys from our little group and we never saw him again.

I had heard that the Chinese thought one was better off dead than insane; so, I pretended to be insane. I would loosen the tourniquet on my leg so gangrene wouldn't set in. Finally, the Chinese took the other prisoners and left, leaving me behind. I survived by eating snow, and icicles, until the 18th of February when I was picked up by a squad of men from the 1st Cavalry. They offered me a drink of water and some food—a can of franks and beans; which I still like to this day. After placing me on a stretcher they carried me to an ambulance, which was occupied by a wounded enemy soldier.

I was taken to a M.A.S.H. unit where I was taken into surgery. They removed the bullet from my knee; I still have the bullet. From there I was

flown to Japan in a C-54, and transported to General Hospital, because they found out that I was a brick—POW.

After a few more hospitals, and surgeries, I re-enlisted. However, on February 28, 1954 I retired from the U.S. Army with a medical discharge.

* * * * *

In 1988, I found out that of us eight wounded men, at Chipyeong-ni, I was the only one to come home alive. Six of the men were beaten in the head until their brains fell out. And Lieutenant Colonel Edgar Treacy, Jr., died on May 31, 1951—while in a POW Camp.

~~*Fifteen*~~

Joseph Lloyd Wosser, Jr.

VMF-323

U.S. Marine Corps

I was attending U.C. Berkeley when World War II broke out, and immediately became interested in flying. In 1943 I joined the U.S. Navy for flight training, as a Navel Cadet. After a year of training, and being in the top ten percent of my class, I was given the opportunity to join the Marines to finish my training. However, the war ended before I was able to qualify for carrier take-offs and landings. But, I kept on training and flying until war broke out in Korea.

The following excerpts are from letters that I wrote to my wife while I was flying F-4U Corsairs off the deck of the *USS Badoeng Strait*.

August 2,

Itami, Japan,

We are staying at the Itami Air Base outside Osaka, Japan and it is very hot.

August 3,

Itami, Japan,

I had 2 FCLP hops today. We start flying at dawn and quit when it is too dark to see the LSO. All the men, plus 8 pilots are aboard the carrier, which sailed today. We are to fly our 24 planes out to meet the carrier in the Sea of Japan.

August 4,

Itami, Japan,

Flew one FCLP and got 8 roger OK passes so am all ready to meet the carrier off Pusan in the morning.

August 5,

Iwakuni, Japan,

On the way to the ship my plane had hydraulic, radio, and fuel transfer failure so I had to land here and get the plane fixed.

August 6,

Iwakuni, Japan,

My plane is ready so I called Itami and they notified the ship, which will send a plane in to show me where the ship is. I see in the papers that the boys are in action today.

August 8,

At sea,

Pop Candle finally flew an extra plane down from Itami so we landed aboard at 4:30. Chet Hall came aboard with no hook and flipped over on his back when he hit the barriers. He will be out 2 or 3 months. Capt. Johnson's hook skipped the wires and he jumped all three barriers and landed on to of Capt. Ferguson's plane at the tail and chewed the plane right up to the armor plate behind Fergy and stopped. Fergy was still in the cockpit and one blade hit him but he is OK.

August 9,

At sea,

Had my first combat hop today.

August 10,

At sea,

Lt. Doyle Cole had engine failure over the target and had to ditch his plane in the water off the coast. A helicopter picked him up, so far we have lost 3 planes but no pilots.

August 10,

At sea,

Captain Moses shot down and picked up by helicopter.

August 11,

At sea,

Captain Moses shot down and killed at Kosong.

August 14,

Sasebo, Japan,

We are now in port to re-supply so I had to check on cleaning all of the guns, testing the rocket launchers and bomb racks. We had memorial services on flight deck for Capt. Moses.

August 15,

At sea,

I flew 2 strikes this afternoon, landing with my lights on at 2035 so I was very tired after 6 hours of flying. We lost another plane when Capt. Penn spun in off the catapult. He got out ok and the destroyer picked him out of the water. Also, one in the catwalk but we'll get that one fixed. They sure better get us some more planes out here for replacements.

August 16,

At sea,

Today we heard that Monk Taylor was shot down but he got OK and is being brought back to his ship. The *Sicily* (214) and *Badoeng Strait* are working together so we fly the afternoon strikes and they fly the morning strikes and visa versa, alternating each day. It is really gratifying to see how well our Close Air Support works with the 1st Marines.

August 19,

At sea,

Only one hop today so will tell about the country we are flying over. Of course I've only flown over the southern part of the country. It is very mountainous with lots of rivers and streams and little villages. No large cities to speak of but thousands of little villages all connected by a very good network of roads with plenty of modern looking bridges crossing most of the rivers. Every piece of land that isn't a sheer mountain is a rice paddy with a terrific system of irrigation, which makes the whole country look very green. There are always clouds over the mountains and a lot of rain in the high country. Most of our targets have been dug-in emplacements in the side of hills, tanks, trucks, ammo dumps, etc..Actually we see very little of the Commies as they hide out most of the day and move at night. Today we burned a little village about 15 miles behind the enemy lines and one of the bombs hit an ammo dump and really set it blazing.

August 20,

At sea,

It is raining now which doesn't seem to make a difference in flying. 4 of my 13 landings have been made in rainstorms. Boy, I've really got to hand it those Marine crunches, they really know how to fight. They just pushed the Commies

back across the Nakdong River like it was child's play. Of course our own squadron and 214 helped out.

Sometimes we're strafing only 40 or 50 yards ahead of our own troops and tanks coming up. We're putting bombs and rockets inside 10 or 20 foot circles now. Can knock out a jeep or truck in one run. But we must remember the North Koreans. They, with Uncle Joe's (Stalin's) help pulled off one of the nicest, smoothest attacks ever staged. They're well trained, their tactics without an air force are superb and they don't make the mistake of attacking in inferior numbers like Hitler did when attacking the Russians. They outnumber our troops 10 to 1 and pick up another 1000 men in every village they over run and have the equipment to supply these men. That's the kind of people we're fighting, besides the fact that to them life is cheap.

August 25,

At sea,

No flying again today. For the last 2 days we've steamed back and forth way up north in the Yellow Sea but no one seems to know why.

August 26,

At sea,

We flew CAS for the Army near Pohang and had some pretty nice targets. On one rocket run I flew through an AA void (where an anti-aircraft shell explodes and leaves the air bumpy, all the fragments already having gone) and I bounced my head off the top of my canopy so hard I still have a headache. It started 2 oil leaks in the top of my engine and coated my windshield with oil and made it darn near impossible to see the LSO when I came aboard.

August 30,

Kyoto, Japan,

The hotel is really something, similar to the Royal Hawaiian. I was going to room with Scotty but he was killed flying into Itami when they hit bad weather, so I'll be rooming with Lt. Doyle Cole.

September 6,

At sea,

We're running interdiction missions between Pyongyang and Taejon hitting everything we see.

September 8,

At sea,

Got me another bridge today. Oster put his bomb on one abutment to the left and I got it on the right side so we knocked out the first span between us.

September 10,

At sea,

Had morning strike today and made a napalm strike on a little island off Inchon.

September 12,

Sasebo, Japan,

We are restocking and loading ammo like mad so watch the papers for something big and we will be right in the middle of it.

September 14,

At Sea,

D minus 1. Today is the first time we've used U.S. Controllers to handle the fire of British ships. There were 4 of us each one to control a cruiser sitting 4 miles off Inchon. Oster and Jack Kelley to control the 2 U.S. Cruisers and Sid Fisher and I to control the 2 British cruisers. Took off at 1145 with 2 belly tanks full of gas. First targets I started firing on were 2 AA guns next to a baseball park right in the city. One of my adjustment rounds knocked out home plate but once those British got on, they leveled those 2 guns—also got a tank that was hid under some big trees. Then I spotted 6 more AA emplacements on top of a hill. Took only 2 adjustments and they were right on with a broadside of 9 – 6 inch shells. I spotted some machine gun emplacements and really gave them a pasting.

September 16,

At sea,

I took off at 0945 and reported in to the target controller who assigned us a road patrol between Inchon and Suwon. Just then I spotted an enemy jeep doing about 50mph. I peeled off with my wingman and caught it dead center with a burst of 20mm. It swerved off the road and stopped, then my wingman, Van Campen, caught him solid. Then we returned to our assigned target in Seoul and really had a field day. We put 6 – 500# bombs, one napalm and 55 rockets into a yard full of truck trailers and fuel supplies. It was leveled, along with a locomotive and 2 tank cars, we attacked next.

September 17,

At sea,

Caught a whole bunch of troops out in the open getting ready to cross the Han River into Seoul. It was awful! They had no place to go—couldn't hide; and we just made run after run on them. Napalm, bombs, rockets and 20mm. When we finished, there were so many dead lying on the beach we couldn't count them.

Usually we never see troops, or if we do, just a few because they are always camouflaged, but that white sand made them really stand out. 2 of our planes were hit but not seriously. 214 had a plane shot down but they got the pilot back after a little trouble. He had a broken leg and the pilot of the helicopter (God bless'em) got out and was helping his mech get the pilot out of his plane; leaving his copter running and just as they got back to it, it took off with no one in it and crashed. They had to send another copter out to get all 3 of them.

October 2,

At sea,

CAS for the Marines pushing up the 38th parallel. When we left station they were about 5 miles from it and still going. When they reach it I don't know what happens then, whether we go over or not.

October 17,

At sea,

We are less than 200 miles from Vladivostok. Last night it turned cold. We're just below the 40th parallel.

October 18,

At sea,

The news from the radio sounds pretty good and it looks like there will be a battle for Pyongyang and then this thing

should be about wound up.

October 25,

At sea,

Flew the morning CAP. As you have probably gathered from some of my letters, I don't have much of a stomach for all this killing when I can actually see that I'm doing it. The precision flying—yes—but to actually see my guns and bombs blow people to bits is very unpleasant to me.

October 27,

At sea,

Took off at 1430 and landed at 1440. The engine started cutting out as soon as I got my wheels up and almost dumped me in the water before I got it smoothed out. It still wasn't right so I came back to the ship and made an emergency landing. My 150th carrier landing.

October 30,

At sea,

"We're here to stay. Home in May." This is our latest sad song. Flew from 1400 to 1715 on a TARCAP over the landing going on up at Iwon about 80 miles NW of Wonson. We spent most of the time looking for floating mines (didn't find any) and covering roads looking for enemy troops.

November 7,

At sea,

At 1030 we received a dispatch requesting more air support so we sent off 3 special strikes and I was on the second one.

We worked 20 miles west of Wonson where a bunch of guerrillas are causing trouble. On my last run of the afternoon, a rocket and strafing attack, a burst of 20 or 40mm AA fire tore a 10 – 12 inch hole in my right elevator and the fabric kept peeling off all the way back to the ship.

November 12,

At sea,

No flying after the first two hops had to return and we are sailing through snow and hail now.

November 14,

At sea,

After the big snow yesterday we sailed into the clear late last night and ran into the big freeze. When we got up this morning we had 3 inches of solid ice covering everything topside.

November 15,

At sea,

We are to steam into Sasebo tomorrow which will end our 31 days at sea.

November 23,

At sea,

We go underway this morning and so will spent Thanksgiving at sea. We were issued winter flying gear which consists of long underwear, heavy knee length socks, one piece rubber exposure suit, special gloves and special

boots. We are going to relieve Task Force 77 which consists of 3 Essex Class Carriers with 4 squadrons apiece.

November 28,

At sea,

Finally flew today after 4 snow days of no flying. We were assigned to support the ROK Capital Division in their drive up the east coast to the Soviet border. Flew the early morning CAP and was up for 3.6 hours and then flew a strike this afternoon for 3.4 hours and practically had to fight our way to the beach, it was snowing so hard. Our strike was 15 miles north of Chougjin. I was leading the hop and they wanted us to drop our bombs and rockets 500 yards ahead of them which we did and strafe 200 yards ahead of them as they moved up to take the ridge line. A Korean interpreter thanked us very profusely.

November 30,

At sea,

We worked with the Marines south of the Chosin Reservoir and they are bottled up with the Chinese Commies moving in in force.

December 1,

At sea,

Our afternoon hop was in support of the Marines in the Chosin Reservoir. We supported a couple of battalions which are cut off and trying to fight their way back. The controller was so frantic, he couldn't talk fast enough or clear enough but it made little difference because we could drop our bombs, napalm or strafe in any direction and hit enemy troops. He wanted us to make strafing runs closer than 50 feet in front of our men because the Commies were pulling the pins from grenades and rolling them down the hill into

our lines. When we expended all our ammo, the next flight was not on station so the controller requested that we make dummy runs anyway.

December 2,

At sea,

Worked over the Chosin Reservoir again and I am happy to report that some of the men we were helping yesterday broke out of the trap and made it across the ice to comparative safety. The Commies have infiltrated so far south that they have the entire 1st Marine Division cut off and isolated, except by air.

December 3,

At sea,

Supported some reinforcements which are trying to battle their way through to the 1st Division in the reservoir. The weather over the target was very poor as it has been all week. I have been flying in weather which normally I wouldn't even walk in.

December 4,

At sea,

Watched Leo Ihli bring his plane in on one wheel. I took off on a CAP and sprung an oil leak so it was difficult to see the LSO as I was coming aboard. In the 2nd plane, the heater didn't work and I about froze my hands and face.

December 7,

At sea,

Hugh "Whiskey" Newell, one of AP's was killed. A good pilot and well liked.

December 9,

At sea,

Worked about 10 miles south of the reservoir where the 1st Marine Division is still trying to fight their way out of the trap. Passed 200 combat hours.

December 11,

At sea,

The weather was good today so we took on lots of supplies. In the refueling area were the battleship *Missouri*, the *Philippine Sea* and the Navy's latest anti-aircraft cruiser *USS Juneau*.

December 12,

At sea,

Took on ammunition today consisting of 2100 rockets, 90,000 rounds of 20mm ammo, 100 500# bombs and much more.

December 13,

At sea,

The war has turned into a big strategic withdrawal.

December 20,

At sea,

Flew afternoon strike 5 miles NE of Hamhung. The way ships are pulling out and moving in, that place looks like Grand Central.

December 25,

At sea,

This has been one of the weirdest Christmases I have ever spent because we worked all day. We left the operating area yesterday when the last evacuation ship pulled out of Hungnam and we spent the rest of the day replenishing. Right now we're steaming for the Yellow Sea. Today 28 of us turned out 52,000 rounds in 9 ½ hours. The Navy with 30 men in 12 hours turns out 15,000 rounds. We broke ordnance expenditure record 81,800 in a week.

December 29,

At sea,

Today we worked up near Kunchow and I really got a beautiful hit right in the mouth of a tunnel with a 500# bomb and blew it all to bits.

December 30,

At sea,

It was so rough today that we were taking water over the flight deck, so of course no flying.

December 31,

At sea,

This finishes 1950 flying with 75 missions, 240 hours since I left home. 184 total carrier landings and 1855 total flight hours.

January 9,

Sasebo, Japan,

All three ships came into port together, the *Badoeng Strait* with VMF-323, the *Sicily* with 214, and the *Bataan* with 212, which of course warranted a party.

January 14,

Sasebo, Japan,

If we are to leave the “*Bing Ding*” tomorrow as reported, it will be our last day aboard this carrier and I guess we have to admit that it has been a good cruise and one we can look back on with pride. We broke all kinds of records, had a wonderful place to stay, made lots of friends (and lost 3) and altogether learned a lot, played a lot, and I hope, brought a little more credit to the Marine Corps.

January 16,

Itami, Japan,

At 0900 we had a big awards ceremony at which I received 2 air medals. The captain gave us a farewell message. We got all 24 planes off at 1300, buzzed the ship and landed here at 1430.

January 22,

Itami, Japan,

We move to Bofu, 60 miles SW of Hiroshima on the 26th and start flying missions on the 27th. As soon as they finish the second field at Pusan, we'll move there.

January 26,

Bofu, Japan,

It is very cold here and we have to sleep in our sleeping bags.

February 3,

Bofu, Japan,

We took off at 0730 and had to battle our way through snow storms all the way across the channel. We worked for the 1st Marine Division north of Pohang where they are cleaning out some guerrillas.

February 5,

Bofu, Japan,

We flew from 0850 to 1320 – 4.4 hours – 15 miles straight north of Wonju where we worked with an Army controller. We had good targets and encountered some of the heaviest AA we've seen in a long time.

February 8,

Camp Besero, Pusan, Korea,

We took off on a 0940 strike today and worked on the east coast just south of Wonson. Landed here afterwards. We are living in a 16 x 32 (6 or 7 to a tent).

February 11,

Pusan, Korea,

HOME!! Our squadron gets 12 pilots and 45 enlisted men as replacements so we had a drawing and I was #5. We'll fly to Itami to get our final orders and mode of transportation.

February 12,
Pusan, Korea,

I flew this morning—armed recon to Chang-chow-ni—and very possibly this was my last hop—my 87th.

All the Corsairs in VMF-323 were equipped with four 20mm cannon's and not the six .50 caliber machine guns that were mounted on them during World War II.

There is a huge difference between cannon and machine gun fire: a cannon round explodes; a round from a machine gun makes a bullet size hole. When strafing the soldiers on the beach, those in close proximity exploded; turning into red mist. This was the scene that upset me the most.

Most of the carrier-based Corsairs during my tenure carried a centerline extra fuel tank; 1 – 1000 lb. bomb and rockets on each wing; and 20mm cannon ammo carried internally. However, this configuration varied widely depending on the mission we were flying. The rockets came in two different weights, and often the centerline fuel tank was replaced with a third 1000 lb. bomb or a 1000 lb. napalm tank. To add to this equation we also had 250 lb. and 500 lb. bombs.

My typical ordnance load would be 2 – 1000 lb. bombs, 4 – HVAR rockets, a belly tank of fuel, and 2000 rounds of cannon ammo. With all this weight, the wings would bend during take-off. The Corsair comes with (an instruction) book telling ordnance men how much they could load, which was a big joke! If anything was cut for safety's sake, it was fuel—never ordnance.

~~*Sixteen*~~

Eric Hanney

USS Gurke—DD-783

U.S. Navy

I was born in Pomona, California on May 25, 1931. After graduating from high school, in Pomona, California—at mid-term—I joined the U.S. Navy. As I was only seventeen, my mother had to sign for me.

Upon completion of basic training, in San Diego, California, I was assigned to the *USS Gurke*—a destroyer. The *Gurke* was armed with 5 inch .38 caliber twin-mounts, 20mm single mounts, 40mm quad and twin-mounts, torpedoes and depth charges; and she roughly held two-hundred men.

* * * * *

On August 5, 1950, the *Gurke* left San Diego for Korea; arriving in time to participate in the Inchon landing. Along with five other destroyers, *DeHaven*, *Mansfield*, *Collett*, *Lyman K. Swenson*, and *Henderson*, the *Gurke* anchored in Inchon Harbor, on the 13th of September. We remained there for two days firing at shore batteries on Wolmi-do Island, and at the same time receiving fire; we were called the Sitting Duck Squadron.

As a Seaman First Class, I was a radar man, which meant I watched the radar for approaching ships. Our head phone was on the same frequency as the look-outs. On one occasion while we were receiving fire, the look-out said he could see where the incoming fire was coming from. Suddenly, he was hit; lucky for him he was just wounded.

One of our sister ships took a direct hit, killing five men.

* * * * *

We also accompanied aircraft carriers to protect them from submarines.

~~Seventeen~~

Tom Enos

1st Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

In 1947, at the age of sixteen and a junior in high school, I enlisted in the Marine Reserves. My mother, at the urging of my older brother, signed papers stating that I was seventeen. My brother was my Reserve Company's First Sergeant, and a Marine veteran of the Second World War.

I was attending college in 1950 and was home for the summer working at a local hardware store, when my Reserve Company was activated on the 26th of July, 1950. Having been in the reserves for three years, and having taken part in the weekly and monthly weekend training along with completing three summer camps, I had been promoted to Corporal.

We arrived at Camp Pendleton during the first part of August, and our Reserve Company was disbanded and mixed in with the Regulars to fill the units of the First Division. I was assigned to G/3/1 and in a few days I would realize how lucky I was to have ended up with a great group of Marines.

Even though our Reserve Company had trained as an infantry unit, we did not have a machine gun section. You guessed it! I was assigned as a gunner to the machine gun section of G/3/1. The other NCO's, and officers, pitched in and brought me up to where I needed to be with regard to being a Machine Gunner.

* * * * *

In San Diego, on August 15, we boarded the *USNS General Simon Buckner* headed for Japan. During our ten day voyage, we learned how to tear down and reassemble our weapons. Once we mastered this, our senior NCO's would tear one weapon down and reassemble it with a part missing.

We were then blindfolded and had to tear it down, figure out which part was missing, find the part in a spare parts box, reassemble the weapon, and load it with ammo. After which time we removed our blindfolds and fired a few rounds off the side of the ship—little did I know in just a few weeks this training would pay off.

We finally arrived in Japan, where we went through more training to get us ready physically and mentally—for combat. We were then taken to Kobe, Japan, where we boarded LST's headed for Inchon, South Korea.

We were to be part of the Inchon Invasion scheduled for September 15. However, we ran into a storm while sailing in the Sea of Japan. I remember the water coming over the bow and splashing over the trucks that were tied down to the deck. Next, you could see the bow come up out of the water, and her flat bottom slapping down on the water; the whole ship groaned, creaked, and popped. Needless to say, I was one scared nineteen year old; however, we made it on schedule.

Once we arrived, we watched as the thirty foot tide receded from the harbor and out from under our LST. That was an eerie feeling, watching the water that we were once floating in vanish from beneath our vessel, leaving us setting in the mud; now we were happy that we were on a flat-bottomed ship.

Now that we couldn't move, we had a bigger problem—the Navy ships shelling the coastline. They were lobbing shells over our heads and if they fired a short round, we could have easily been hit. This went on all morning and into the afternoon.

Finally, the tide began to return, so we loaded into our Amtracs; which were stored in the belly of the LST. The LST lowered its ramp and we drove off into the water. Our mission was to head to the mouth of a creek, or storm drainage area, to secure it so the Seabees could come ashore with their equipment the following morning.

Corporal Barnes, our lead wireman, was hit and killed as he was cutting some barbed wire. Since we were receiving very little fire, we figured we were being shot at by a sniper. Just ahead of us was a smokestack with a hole in it about three-quarters up. We quickly set up two light machine guns, and zeroed in on the hole. After watching several tracers disappear into the hole, we stopped firing for a few minutes. The

enemy fire had stopped, so we proceeded cutting the wire and moved further ashore.

What a first night! Little did I know, worse nights were a head.

The following day we got a good scare as we were advancing forward on foot. As we were moving along a trail on a hillside, suddenly we heard what sounded like machine gun fire. Immediately everyone hit the ground. The sound then lessened some, so we looked up and saw a female pheasant flying off her nest. Not being a bird hunter, I didn't realize they made that kind of noise when they took off. Needless to say, it wasn't funny at the time, but afterwards it was a little humorous.

* * * * *

On our way to Seoul we had to cross the Han River, but all the bridges in our area had been blown up during the early days of the war. So, they had to bring up some DUKW's to ferry us across. Talking about being surprised! The driver of our DUKW was a hometown buddy of mine. He was in our Reserve Company, and when they disbanded us at Camp Pendleton he was assigned to the motor pool. Finally, we reassembled on the other side and proceeded toward Seoul—on foot.

As we entered Seoul, the street fighting that we encountered was almost indescribable. There were trees—in the parking strips—that lined the streets, which the enemy used for cover. We quickly set up our light machine guns and cross fired into the trees, as well as the storefronts. More than once did a body fall out of a tree, and as we slowly made our way through the city, we found bodies in the doorways of the storefronts. That day I burned out the barrel of my gun, but I was able to quickly replace it due to the training we had received aboard ship.

After we had secured the city, General MacArthur and President Truman agreed that we would proceed north across the 38th parallel, so back to Inchon we went. At Inchon we boarded LST's. This time we sailed around to the east coast of the Korean Peninsula. Before boarding, Captain Westover, our company commander, and three other captains—all with World War II and Korean service—were transferred to Quantico, Virginia. They had been selected to be instructors for an updated officers training program.

Captain Carl Sitter became our new commander. He turned out to be another great leader.

* * * * *

We arrived at Wonsan Harbor, only to find it completely laced with Russian mines. Withdrawing from the harbor, we had to lay off the coast for three days so Navy frogmen and minesweepers, could clear the harbor. When the harbor had been cleared enough for us to go ashore, we discovered our air support was already using the airport and other facilities in the area. As we disembarked, the pilots had fun waving at us as we marched by the buildings they were now using as barracks.

After disembarking, our objective was the town of Majon-ni, which was southwest of Wonsan. We were behind the North Korean troops as they were retreating north, and we had some problems with them. With the arrival of November, it became colder day-by-day as we traveled further north. One day I bathed in a stream that ran through town and had snow and ice along its banks. Needless to say, it was a quick bath.

By now we had seen our share of action and casualties, and were in need of replacements. A few days later the entire company reorganized. Guys were moved around to even out our squads; I was moved to a new machine gun section, in a different platoon.

Our company received orders to send a platoon to ride shot-gun in a convoy to take prisoners back to Wonsan; they were to bring back our winter gear. My old platoon drew the short straw and I waited in Majon-ni for their return. Unfortunately, only a few of my original platoon made it back. After dropping off the prisoners, and heading back with our winter gear, they were ambushed. Several were killed and wounded, but most of the trucks were able to turn around and make it back to Wonsan. Now our winter gear had to be airdropped to us.

A few days later, we received orders to go to Wonsan and Hamhung to start our journey further north. For most of the trip we rode in open rail cars, which was better than walking. On the way to Koto-ri we had a nice hot turkey dinner out in the open on a cold, snowy Thanksgiving Day. We finally made it to Koto-ri with no trouble, but it was getting colder and the snow was getting deeper.

A day or two after arriving in Koto-ri, the British Royal Marine Commandos arrived during the darkness of night. By morning, Task Force Drysdale had been assembled. It consisted of 205 men from G/3/1, 235 men from the British Royal Marine Commandos, 190 men from Baker Company of the 31st Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army, and 83 miscellaneous personnel totaling 712 men, along with 65 vehicles. The task force was named for Lt. Col. Drysdale, the ranking officer of the British Commandos.

We were told the Chinese had started their movement south, and we were urgently needed at Hagaru-ri, which was eleven miles north of Koto-ri. We were to help maintain the perimeter, so those troops further north could work their way back to Hagaru-ri. Here we would regroup for our fight south to Hungnam.

At about 0945 hours, Task Force Drysdale left Koto-ri, expecting some resistance, but it turned out to be a lot worse. The British Commandos, along with the U.S. Marines, took turns going up the hillsides while their trucks stayed on the road. We began receiving reports that the Chinese were setting up roadblocks.

Roughly at 1130, Drysdale was informed that seventeen tanks from D Company, 1st Tank BN would be available to him at 1300 hours—with another twelve, two hours later. He decided to regroup all his forces and wait for the seventeen tanks. We needed these tanks to help break through the roadblocks. At 1350 hours we began our push to Hagaru-ri with the seventeen tanks leading our convoy; bringing up the rear would be the other twelve tanks. Due to pockets of resistance, weather, an icy road and roadblocks, our progress was extremely slow. Vehicles were sliding off the road, only to be towed or pushed back on the road.

Around 1615 hours, not even halfway to Hagaru-ri, the head of the convoy came to a complete stop. About mid-way of the convoy, we got hit hard from the flank resulting in many killed, and some captured. Unbeknownst to us, the Chinese had severed the convoy, but most of the British Commandos and Marines from G/3/1, along with the lead seventeen tanks, were still intact at the front of the convoy.

With orders to proceed at all costs, we continued to Hagaru-ri. We climbed into, and onto whatever vehicle was close by. Sometimes we had to stop, because the lead vehicle was disabled, or to take care of the wounded.

For those of us who could, we immediately set up along side the road and provided cover fire for those who tried to find out why we had stopped. After the problem was taken care of, we quickly mounted our vehicles and continued our journey. Before reaching Hagaru-ri, these stop-and-goes happened several times.

Lt. Col. Drysdale and our Gunnery Sgt. Rocco Zullo were among the wounded; Captain Sitter had now taken over as the CO of Task Force Drysdale. By now the temperatures were ranging from twenty-five below in the day, to forty below at night.

Finally, reaching Hagaru-ri and having taken care of our wounded, Task Force Drysdale was disbanded. Then we, G/3/1, received our new orders—get a few hours rest, and sleep if possible, because in the morning we had a hill to retake. It was important that we controlled this hill, for the safety of our perimeter. Before I tried to get any sleep, I cleaned my gun. However, I made the mistake of lubricating the parts like I normally did—by morning my gun was frozen and unusable.

As we were moving out to retake the hill, I was told to stay and re-clean my gun—this time not using lubricants. After finishing, I caught up with my squad about a third of the way up the hill.

After running into some resistance, we were able to take control of what was known as East Hill. It was now the 30th of November and we were expecting a counterattack, so we dug in the best we could—considering the ground was frozen. We were fighting the Chinese, dressed in the cotton padded uniforms and split-toed sneaker type shoes; they liked to attack at night—in hordes.

Attack in hordes they did, blowing their bugles and whistles. I remember thinking this night would never end, or it would end quickly. We were overrun; we were throwing their hand grenades back at them. We were holding our position, as bodies began to pile up in front of, and around us. I had called in mortar support, which we never received.

During the night, Captain Sitter crawled up to our position to explain to us why there was no mortar support. He had all the mortar men, headquarter personnel, and any other man he could come up with, busy rounding up and capturing all the Chinese that had broken through our

lines. Then he went on to tell us that the Korean troops had retreated leaving our right flank exposed; he warned us to be careful.

Finally, dawn began to break, which was a pleasant feeling. The Chinese had a tendency to leave their dead and wounded behind. On many occasions the wounded would lay there and shoot at any target they could see. We later found out that a few men in another area had been wounded in this manner.

One morning, a couple of us went down the hill to get something to eat. We managed to bring back a case of fragmentary grenades, and some illuminating grenades. During the day, we spent some time removing all the tracer rounds from our machine guns ammo belt. This would keep the Chinese from zeroing in on us during the night. This time we were determined that we would not get overrun again—and we weren't. On the 1st of December they made their second attack, which wasn't as bad as their first; however, there was still a lot of action.

We would throw a grenade over the hillside—in front of us—along with an illuminating grenade every thirty to forty minutes. These would light up the draw between our position and theirs. Our tanks down on the road took advantage of the light and would fire rounds into the draw.

If you were fortunate enough to still have a sleeping bag at this point you didn't dare get in it during the night, for fear of being caught in it if we were overrun again. With the extreme cold, and being in it twenty-four hours a day, frostbite had now become a factor.

On the morning of December 4th, I went down to get something to eat. As I was returning to relieve another Marine, so he could get something to eat, I found myself falling down every few steps. Every time I fell, I laid in the snow trying to muster enough strength to get up, and get up the hill. The last time I fell, not knowing how long I had laid in the snow, I tried to crawl up the hill. Then one of our new replacements, a staff sergeant, came along and rolled me over, asking me what was wrong. Even with his help, I still fell. So, he told me to wait there and he would go get a corpsman.

Shortly afterwards, a couple of corpsman arrived and were able to get me to a tent. They told me the doctor would be in to see me later. Even though it was cold in the tent, it was the warmest I had been in days, so before I knew it I had fallen asleep on the floor.

A few hours later the corpsman and doctor woke me up, and then I explained to them what had happened. The doctor told me to take off my shoes, so he could look at my feet. Both of my big toes had turned black on the ends. He then wrote out an evacuation tag and tied it onto one of my coat buttons. I tried to tell him that if I could warm up a bit that I would be okay. He said, "No." He then went on to say that everyone was going to have their feet inspected and those like mine would be classified as unfit to walk, and flown out. Continuing, he said we would be more of a hindrance than help when time came for us to fight our way out.

He went on to inform me that he would take care of letting someone from G/3/1 know my situation. I was taken by a corpsman to the air strip to be flown out on the next available flight to Hungnam. When we arrived, there was a plane sitting there with its engines running. Since I could still walk—somewhat—there was room for me. All the stretcher patients had already been strapped in, so they strapped me in one of the bucket seats. Several more walking wounded came aboard then they closed the door, taxied out, and took off for Hungnam.

Finally, arriving at a field hospital in Hungnam, I was told they would probably fly me to a hospital in Japan the following morning. I ended up in an Army hospital located somewhere in southern Japan. After evaluating my condition, a couple of doctors came by later in the day to give me their diagnosis. They said my hands would heal just fine by themselves, but both of my big toes would have to be amputated.

Not liking what I heard, I requested to see a Marine Liaison Officer. Not knowing where one was, they continued to insist that my toes needed to be amputated. However, I continued requesting to see a Naval or Marine person to obtain a second opinion.

The following day a Master Sergeant, from the Marine Corps, came to see me. After a couple of days of talking back and forth, he had some good news. He had arranged for me to go by myself, by a civilian train, to a town that had a naval hospital.

On the third morning of the trip, the train stopped and two corpsmen came and took me to the Yokuska Naval Hospital. I was classified as a stretcher case, but they told me they would start me on a treatment to try to save my toes; this sounded a lot better than amputation.

They kept me in bed with my feet wrapped in cotton, inside plastic bags. Three or four times a day, nurses came in and shot hot saline solution into the plastic bags, saturating the cotton. Once a day, they removed the plastic bags and cotton to inspect my feet and toes. Then they re-wrapped them in cotton and placing them back in plastic bags, repeating the same procedures.

Several days later, some corpsmen came into our ward and started to take out some of the other frostbite stretcher patients. We were told these guys were being flown stateside, because their beds were needed for incoming wounded and even worse cases of frostbite. Returning, they said they had all the stretcher cases the plane could handle and now they were taking ambulatory cases with frostbite. Again they returned saying there was room for only one more, only if this person could get out of bed and walk over to them. Needless to say, I hit the floor in a run; the corpsmen said I would do. They told the rest of the guys, in the ward, that they hoped to load another plane the following day. Those on stretchers were stacked four high, in the middle of the plane; I was given a bucket seat.

A few hours after take-off, we landed at Midway Island to refuel and a box lunch was provided for everyone. When we were back in the air, they told us we were headed for Hawaii. Landing at Hickam Air Force Base, we were off loaded and taken to Tripler Naval Hospital for a good nights sleep. However, due to an engine problem, we stayed an extra night.

Finally, we were able to get airborne again, landing at Travis Air Force Base during the middle of the night. From Travis, we were bused to the Oakland Naval Hospital.

Neither my parents, nor my future wife, knew that I had left the front lines. Needless to say, they were shocked, and relieved, to know that I was back in the States and not seriously wounded. However, the word gangrene didn't sound too good to anyone either.

The doctors got me started on some physical therapy, which hurt like hell. For thirty minutes, four times a day, I had to soak my feet. I had to use two different pans; one with water as hot as I could stand, and the other with ice water. I had to switch my feet back and forth from the hot water to the ice water, which was extremely painful.

Since it was nearing Christmas, they were trying to let as many men as they could to go home for the holidays. After promising the doctors that I would do my therapy at home, they let me go. I arrived home on December 20, 1950—for Christmas.

* * * * *

In January of 1952, I was released from active duty and returned to inactive reserve status.

~~Eighteen~~

Forrest O'Neal

1st Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

I had three brothers who served in the military during World War II; one in Europe, two in the Pacific. After graduating high school I had planned on attending college, instead on September 19, 1949 I enlisted in the Marine Corps.

Living in Mexico, Missouri, I traveled by train to Camp Lejuene, North Carolina, where I did my basic training. From here I traveled to Camp Pendleton. In August I boarded a troop carrier, in San Diego, bound for Kobe, Japan, where we docked in late August or early September.

I was assigned to the S-1 Section (Personnel Section) of the 1st Marine Regiment. When we received messages, it was our duty to take them to other section leaders. We were also responsible for security around the regimental CP.

On the 15th of September, we took part in the Inchon Invasion. Before the invasion could take place, there was an island—Wolmi-do—in the Bay of Inchon that had to be taken. The North Koreans had shore batteries located there that needed to be knocked-out—this fell to the 5th Regiment.

When the invasion started, it became chaotic and plans were not going as scheduled. So, Colonel Puller wanted to get things back on track and running smoother. We had been scheduled to go in on the third wave. Instead we moved up to the second wave—landing on Blue Beach at 4:00 or 4:30 PM. When we landed the tide was at thirty feet and we had to climb up a hill, but to the right of us was a seawall. Many Marines were killed going over that wall. At Inchon we lost twenty to twenty-five troops, and approximately one-hundred were wounded.

After Inchon, we headed south to Seoul. As we crossed the Han River, we had to ride in DUKW's. While we were going up the beach, we hit a land-mine which blew the front end off the DUKW. Luckily, no one was killed, but one guy did have both of his eardrums bust.

Before taking Seoul, another soldier and myself were outside the CP—Col. Puller always wanted his CP on a hillside—taking ammo from a truck and loading them onto tanks. Suddenly, we came under mortar fire. A round hit five feet from where I was standing. Fortunately for me, it was a dud.

After we had taken Seoul, we were to head north. We returned to Inchon and boarded ships. We sailed around the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, and landed at Wonsan, North Korea, on the 26th of October. After disembarking, we headed north leap froggin with the 5th and 7th Marines.

When we were about twelve miles south of the Chosin Reservoir, we—1st Marines—stopped at Koto-ri. Here we set up the regimental CP.

The 31st and 32nd Regiments of the Army's 7th Infantry Division were north of the reservoir, with the 5th and 7th Marines on the west side. On the 27th of November, between 120,000-to-125,000 Chinese soldiers swarmed down on us with the purpose of wiping us out. The Chinese attacked from the front, and tried to go around our flanks. This was a maneuver they had used during the Chinese Civil War.

The 31st and 32nd Regiments had been chewed up pretty bad, but instead of telling them to get out, General Almond told them to stay and hold. The 5th and 7th Marines were also hit hard. As wounded members of the 7th Infantry Division were lying on the frozen reservoir, a Marine sergeant, along with others, went to retrieve them. They used trucks and even sleds to bring them back to safety.

Finally, General MacArthur gave orders to pull out. Fighting our way out was just as rough as fighting our way in. When pulling out, the 5th and 7th Marines went through us at Koto-ri. We were the last to leave; only seven tanks were behind us.

* * * * *

While we were at the Chosin Reservoir it was bitterly cold, with temperatures reaching forty below zero and the wind-chill hitting eighty

below. If your fingers, or toes, turned black, it was time to seek medical treatment. My hands got frostbitten once, when another soldier and I were loading supplies that had been airdropped—we were outside all day.

At the Chosin, we inflicted a 70 percent casualty rate against the Chinese Forces.

* * * * *

It was around 4:30 PM when we left Koto-ri. However, we had to stop around midnight to put in a bridge. We continued on until 8:00 AM, the following morning, when we were able to catch a ride—on a truck—to the port of Hungnam.

We sailed to Pusan, where we disembarked and were taken by train to Masan. Here I stayed for the rest of my time in Korea, never returning to the front lines.

~~*Nineteen*~~

Victor Shepherd

1st Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

When North Korea invaded South Korea, I was working at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Virginia. Word soon went out that volunteers were needed as corpsman for the Marines. Along with five or six other guys, I placed my name on the list. In a few days we were on a plane headed to California.

It was during July when we arrived at Camp Pendleton, where we went through indoctrination and training. After which time, we traveled to San Diego to board the *USS General Buckner* for our voyage to Japan.

After about twenty days at sea, we finally arrived in Japan, and were taken by train to Camp Otsu. Here we went through training for an amphibious landing, which we learned later would be at Inchon.

Roughly at 1730 hours, on September 15, 1950, we disembarked our ship and loaded into AMTRACS for our trip to the beach. It was pure chaos; the sea was full with ships unloading troops, rockets were being fired at the beach, and the big guns of the battleships were firing at the shoreline.

We were supposed to have been in the third wave, landing at Blue Beach. However, due to the confusion from all the firing, and restricted visibility from the rockets, we were in the first wave to hit the beach. Actually, there was no beach, just an eight foot high seawall that we had to climb. Each AMTRAC's coxswain had built a four-or-five foot ladder, which we used to climb over the wall. Our objective was to secure the beach and proceed to a small hill south of our landing site. We were to accomplish this by 2000 hours.

As we made our way toward the hill, we were approached by many civilians fleeing the fighting that was going on in the city of Inchon. I

stopped to treat as many of the wounded civilians as I could; these were the first casualties of the war that I treated.

That first night we were all nervous, and closely watched for infiltrators. On the skyline I spied a figure and called to Gunny Dartez for instructions; he told me to keep an eye on it, so I spent most of the night with my carbine, and attention, glued to it. If it had moved, I would have shot its twig off—it was a bush. The following morning we headed toward Seoul, which was twenty miles away.

One day we had stopped to reorganize, when I heard that a couple men had fallen behind. Apparently, one of them was suffering from heat exhaustion and was being helped by another soldier. I could see them about two-hundred yards away, on the side of a hill, so I grabbed my medical kit and went to help. The guy wasn't in that bad of shape, so I gave him some water and a salt tablet; then I sent him on to his unit. They hadn't gotten twenty yards when a mortar round hit behind us; the blast knocked me to my knees. The soldier with the heat problem was peppered with some small stones and dirt, but wasn't seriously injured. However, the other guy was injured. We got him back to his unit where his corpsman could take care of him. I returned to my unit, which was a mortar platoon.

On our way to Seoul we passed through the small town of Yongdungpo, and some small dikes, when I heard someone calling for a corpsman. Immediately, I ran into a burning thatch hut, but found no one. My buddies were yelling for me to get back to the line, since I had gone about thirty yards out in front of it. Not finding anyone, I was sure it was a North Korean soldier looking for a trophy—an American Corpsman. To avoid being called by an enemy soldier, we used a code word—lame duck—to call for a corpsman.

We were in reserve one day while in Seoul, and sitting on the sides of a wide street trying not to be targets for snipers. Suddenly, an officer came walking down the middle of the street waving and shouting words of encouragement to the men. Following him were some junior officers ducking and trying not to get hit by the bullets that were ricocheting off the street. I turned to the guy next to me and asked, "Who the hell is that nut?"

He replied, "That's 'Chesty' Puller, a Marine's Marine!"

That was the only time I ever saw “Chesty,” but, I’ll always remember it.

In Seoul we were set up on a small plateau, dotted with Korean houses. Our rifle platoons were higher up on the hill flushing out the enemy. Soon, two Koreans carrying a litter with a wounded Marine came down the hill. The officer accompanying them asked for a corpsman to transport the wounded soldier to the aid station. The Koreans carried the litter, and two Marines went along as guards.

The wounded Marine was Sgt. John Darakjian, who had thrown a grenade into a hole where a North Korean soldier was hiding. The North Korean threw it back out, and it exploded in front of the sergeant—blowing the side of his face off. Needless to say, he was in serious condition. I had to ask where the aid station was, and was told, “Back there somewhere.” We were instructed to go to the base of the hill, go left to the wide street that we could see in the distance, then go right on that street, and after a mile ask for directions. So, off we went.

It was late afternoon and we walked until it began to get dark. The whole time we were under sporadic sniper fire. Lucky for us, these guys couldn’t hit the broadside of a barn—even if they were inside with the door shut. When it got dark, the sniper fire intensified causing the Korean litters bearers to take off running; they left us. After the sniper fire had died down the two Marine guards picked up the litter and we were off again, with no idea where we were going.

Suddenly, I saw jeep headlights—in the distance—coming towards us. As the jeep approached, with my carbine ready, I stepped out in front of it. After identifying myself, I told the driver I had a badly wounded soldier and that I was commandeering his jeep—he agreed. We placed the litter on the back of the jeep and I sat beside it. Luckily, the driver knew where the aid station was located and drove us there. The two Marines went back to their unit, and the driver took me back to mine. When we arrived, they were digging in on the small plateau; I immediately fell sleep.

While in Seoul, we saw the bombed out palace, spent a night in a bombed-out prison, and were positioned near a hill that was covered with the bodies of butchered towns people. The North Koreans had butchered

men, women, and children, most of which had their hands tied behind their backs.

Finally, we withdrew back to Inchon where we went into reserve. We bivouacked in an old factory for a few days, and regrouped. Then one morning we boarded ships headed for Pusan. Here we trained for a landing at Wonsan—in North Korea.

When we arrived at Wonsan, we stayed off shore for a few days sailing up and down the coast. The harbor was heavily mined and we had to wait for the Navy UDT teams, and minesweepers, to clear the harbor. By the time we went ashore, the South Korean Army had fought its way to Wonsan and beyond; our landing was a walk-on.

After a few days, we loaded onto trucks and traveled thirty miles to the small town of Mejon-ni, where we established a listening post. We were also to keep three roads, which met in town, open for our supplies. It got to the point that our supplies couldn't get through, so they were dropped in by C-119's or "Flying Boxcars." They would come in at about one-hundred feet, or so, and drop the supplies and ammo by parachutes.

We were relieved at Mejon-ni, by the Army, and we returned to Wonsan. We stayed there for a short time in preparation for a seventy mile journey north—to the Chosin Reservoir.

Our uneventful journey, to the plateau, took us through the mountains via a narrow road. The higher we went, the colder it got. While we were at the Chosin, we saw temperatures dipping as low as forty degrees below zero, with winds up to 50mph. We came to a small cross-roads town called Hagaru-ri, located on the southern end of the reservoir. Item Company—the company I was in—dug in west of the airport and our mortar platoon was set up on the thinly stretched front line. The mortars required their base plate to be firmly placed in the ground. However, with the ground being frozen, the only thing we could do was to pile sandbags on them. We faced a low hill about three-hundred yards in front of us, and the rest of the company was on a hill to our right. To our left was a marshy area. Howe Company was located beyond it. The aid station was located about twenty yards behind us, on a road that curved around the hill to our right. It was set up in a large hut built into the hill. Since the aid station was that close to the

front lines, the doctors were always dodging bullets that penetrated the walls.

The Chinese would attack during the night. We would hear the shrieks of their bugles and whistles, and then all hell would break loose. The following morning, after the battles, the fields in front of us would be littered with the bodies of fallen Chinese.

During one battle, we illuminated the sky with flares to see what was happening. Coming towards us were hundreds of Chinese soldiers dressed in dirty yellow, padded uniforms; it was like shooting fish in a barrel.

Our mortars were firing so fast that the tubes began to glow a dark red. Gunners carefully sprinkled snow on the tubes to reduce the heat. If the tubes overheated they would deform, and become useless. To this day, I don't understand how, or why, we were not overrun.

One day an officer asked for volunteers to defend East Hill until a permanent detail could be found. East Hill was located on the east side of Hagaru-ri, and there was a great need to get an occupying force on top of the hill; I volunteered to go. After we reached the top and spread out, a few shots were fired, some grenades were thrown, but no battle broke out. Several hours later we were relieved by—I believe—the British Commandos.

Word came down for us to leave and nothing was to be left behind that could be used by the enemy. Anything that had to be left, we destroyed or rendered useless. Bridges that we crossed, along with our ammo dump, was blown up.

The first town to the south was Koto-ri, where the Marines headquarters had been set up. The road to Koto-ri was in the middle of a wide valley that ran between low mountains. The Chinese were shooting at us from these mountains, so our Corsairs were called in to drop napalm on them. Before we could continue on, the road had to be cleared of the enemy. We were surrounded by hundreds of thousands of Chinese; we had to fight every inch of the way.

We spent a night on a hill, near Chinhung-ni where we had to kick holes in twelve inches of snow to make a place for our sleeping bags. The aid station was set up in the valley below. That night the mercury dipped to thirty degrees below zero. The following morning I went about my duties,

but around noontime I was having trouble walking. I soon found out that the liners in my snow pack boots had frozen to my feet. Hobbling to the aid station, not only was I able to get some clean socks, but I placed my feet up to a hot stove and let the ice melt off them. After washing and massaging them, I put on the clean socks. Lucky for me, my feet recovered quickly with no permanent damage.

As we continued our march south, the road at the power station in Funchilin Pass had been blown up—by the enemy. We had to hold up our march while the engineers repaired the road with bridge sections that were dropped by C-119's. Finally, the road was repaired and once again we were on our way. As the road wound down the mountains, and through the valleys, there were signs of fierce battles—destroyed vehicles and dead soldiers. As we proceeded, the mountain sides became steeper and the valleys narrower. From the mountains we could hear gun fire and see Marines along the ridges firing at the enemy—they were keeping us safe. We continued on to Hungnam.

Arriving in Hungnam we were taken by ship to Pusan, from there we were trucked to Andong and put in reserve. My memory is hazy about anything after being at Andong, except in late April, 1951, at Hill 902.

We were driven to the base of a 3000 foot mountain called Hill 902. We needed to be in control of the hill before the enemy arrived. The entire 3rd BN moved up the hill as fast as we could. As soon as the leading units reached the top, the enemy opened fire. Our mortar platoon immediately placed a squad behind each of the three platoons. Sporadic fighting went on all day lasting into the night.

Off in the distance we could hear the muffled sound of artillery firing. Seconds later incoming shells screamed overhead and exploded in the valley beyond. The shells were coming closer to us each time they fired. We could hear the forward observer screaming, "No! No! I said up one-hundred, up one-hundred!" Suddenly, all hell broke loose as a barrage exploded to our right—into our lines—killing a number of Marines.

The following day we withdrew, because—I think—the South Koreans could not hold their position, so we were forced to move to a new line.

* * * * *

I left Korea in June of 1951, and was transferred to a dispensary at the Naval Air Technical Training Center in Jacksonville, Florida.

~~*Twenty*~~

Robert Harbula

1st Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

In June of 1948, at the age of seventeen, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps. In July 1950, I volunteered to go to Korea; I was in George Company, 3rd BN, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division.

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Along with the Army's 7th Infantry Division, a South Korean Marine regiment, the 1st Marine Division made up the newly formed Tenth Corps. They loaded us onto ships in Japan. Sailing up the Yellow Sea, we landed at the port city of Inchon on the 15th of September—catching the North Koreans by surprise.

After securing Inchon, we moved twenty miles inland to the capital city of Seoul, which was the main access route for the NKPA to get back north. As the U.S. Army, along with their ROK counterparts were finally breaking out of the Pusan Perimeter, the NKPA began to head north. With Seoul secured, the NKPA was taking an eastern route around the city. Instead of attacking east, we were ordered—by General MacArthur—to leave Seoul for Inchon. There we boarded ships and set sail for the east coast. We, the Marines, were to land at Wonson, North Korea; the 7th Infantry Division would land at Iwon, North Korea.

* * * * *

Apparently, someone forgot to check the harbor conditions at Wonson. It was heavily mined. So, we had to wait out at sea another ten days while the Navy took care of the mines.

We finally landed, unopposed, on the 26th of October. Having been informed that the 15th Division of the NKPA was setting up guerrilla operations in the area, we were ordered to Majon-ni on the twenty-eighth.

By now the weather was changing; it was becoming extremely cold. It was too cold for just field jackets, and we had no gloves or anything to put over our ears. We were told that winter gear would soon be arriving in Wonson, in time for the upcoming campaign.

A large number of NKPA had been captured by the 3rd of November, and there was no facility in Majon-ni to handle them. Lt. Beeler and his second platoon were ordered to escort the prisoners back to Wonson and to pick up our winter gear.

The machine gun squad that I was in, led by Sgt. Bob Hurt was also assigned to go on this mission. Fifty men, including the drivers, loaded onto ten trucks and made an uneventful trip to Wonson. However, some of the guys had hoped the North Koreans would have tried something. Some had a bad taste in their mouths after seeing many dead G.I.'s with their hands tied behind their backs; along with women and children massacred in the hills around Seoul. But, they had no such luck.

After turning the prisoners over to Division we collected the winter gear, which consisted of heavy parkas, boots, scarves, and gloves equipped with wool liners, and headed back to Majon-ni. As we neared a summit of one of the numerous mountains, we had to cross a road and make a sharp turn to the left. I was sitting on the tailgate of the third truck, along with two ammo carriers. When suddenly, from behind a boulder, stepped several NKPA's opening fire on us with Russian made burp guns. In unison, all three of us fell off the tailgate onto the road; but, I continued to roll to a small berm in the valley below. The other two laid motionless in the middle of the road, with their eyes open. The first three trucks continued on, but the following trucks stopped and the other Marines quickly set up a skirmish line and returned fire.

Luckily, I still had my carbine and I began to fire at some NKPA's in the valley below. Apparently they didn't care about the ambush, because they never returned fire. I decided not to stay there, but where should I go? I could either join the skirmish line, or go see what happened to Sgt. Hurt—who was riding shotgun in the second truck. I went to see about Sarge.

As I worked my way around the bend, I saw all three trucks stopped behind some large boulders which had been used to block the road. I began to survey the situation and noticed four-or-five Marines lying motionless on the ground around the trucks. The driver of the third truck had taken cover under his vehicle; I motioned for him to stay there. Carefully working my way to the second truck, I noticed in the cab was a very shaken driver and Sgt. Hurt, who had a serious shoulder wound. His shoulder had been shattered and he was unable to move. I was unable to check out the first truck, as there were four enemy soldiers standing about thirty yards in front of it.

I could have gotten the non-wounded guys out by retracing my footsteps, but this meant leaving the wounded behind—this was not an option. Checking the back of the truck, I noticed a machine gun sitting on a box. I asked the driver if he could turn the truck around on such a narrow road. He said he could, but when we started to move the enemy would see us and open fire. I told him that I would use the machine gun that was in the back of the truck for cover fire, but he was not to move until I tapped on the cab. Then I went to tell the driver of the third truck about our plans.

Returning to the second truck, I climbed into the back and spotted PFC Jack Dunne, a rifleman, behind some boxes. Realizing I couldn't use the tripod because it would bounce all over the boxes, I only had one option—fire it from the hip. Using some webbing, I wrapped my left hand to protect it from the heat of the barrel. I tapped on the cab, made eye contact with the driver, stood up, and opened fire. This completely took the NKPA's by surprise, as I took out three of them with my first burst. The fourth took cover behind some boulders, and by this time Jack was firing with his M-1. We were drawing a lot of fire as the trucks managed to get turned around.

I thought the drivers would stop when they reached the skirmish line and join the other Marines. However, they were so shaken up, they kept on going down the road. It was a wild ride and as we neared the bottom, an explosion caused the truck I was riding in to swerve off the road, and down a deep gully. I jumped clear of the truck as it left the road. The driver of the lead truck saw what happened, in his rear view mirror and came back. Then both of us went down the gully to check on the guys in the truck; they were unconscious, but out of harms way.

Needing medical help, we quickly made our way back to Regimental Headquarters. After reporting our situation, Colonel Puller rounded up all available men, including cooks and clerks. It was apparent that no radio messages were sent to headquarters about the ambush. One could only assume the radio must have been in the first truck with Lt. Beeler. When we arrived back at the ambush site, the NKPA's were gone; they must have seen Col. Puller's rescue force coming up the mountain.

For Sgt. Hurt and PFC Dunne, the war was over. After being treated for their wounds, they were flown to a hospital in Japan. Out of the fifty men we started with, nine were killed and fifteen were wounded. Included in the dead; Lt. Beeler.

After the ambush, I became the new machine gun squad leader; I was the only one left from the original squad that landed at Inchon. Captain Carl Sitter was our new company commander and he wanted combat veterans in charge of the machine guns and mortars—regardless of rank. I was fortunate to have gotten another veteran—PFC Joe Rice—from another squad to be my assistant gunner. Green replacements would make up the rest of my squad.

Since many replacements had been added to the company, Capt. Sitter ordered everyone under his command to cut up the red airdrop parachutes and wear them for identification purposes. We became known as "Sitter's Bastards."

* * * * *

By November 27, 1950, more than 120,000 Chinese soldiers had surrounded all Marine and Army units in the area of the Chosin Reservoir, and cut the main supply route in several places. All Marine and Army units from Koto-ri and Yudam-ni were cut off, and would have to fight for their own survival.

At Koto-ri, Col. Puller put together Task Force Drysdale. It consisted of 235 men from the 41 Independent Commando, British Royal Marines; 205 men of George Company, 3rd BN, 1st Marines; 190 men from Baker Company, 31st Infantry (U.S. Army); and roughly 200 from headquarter units, totaling 712 men and sixty-five vehicles. The task force was named for Lt. Col. Douglas Drysdale, commander of the British Royal Marines.

Marine airplanes had spotted numerous Chinese roadblocks along the main supply route; we needed armor. Tanks from Chinhung-ni were headed to Koto-ri, but wouldn't arrive before mid-afternoon. Being outnumbered at least ten-to-one, and no armor, our mission would be suicidal. However, the urgency at Hagaru-ri did not allow us to wait. So, we left Koto-ri without armor.

On the 29th of November, at 0945, the 41 Independent Commando attacked the first hill on the way to Hagaru-ri, taking it with little trouble. George Company swung around them, attacking the second hill. After intense fighting, we gained control of the hill.

Both units came off the hills we had just captured and moved up the supply route to our next objective. When we left, the Chinese reoccupied the two hills. Our next objective was a mile up the road, and well fortified with mortars and machine guns. As the Marines attacked along the way, they ran into a hailstorm of bullets. Casualties began to mount up and there were no replacements available. We were ordered to the road, to wait for further instructions.

Around 1130 as Drysdale contemplated his next move, he was informed that seventeen tanks would be available around 1300 hours, with another twelve two hours later. Their extra firepower would be needed to help break through the roadblocks. Plus, this would bring the task force up to 922 men, 141 vehicles, and twenty-nine tanks. So, he decided to wait.

At 1350 the attack started again, with the seventeen tanks in the lead; when the other twelve arrived they would be attached to the rear. Our pace was slow due to the many pockets of resistance, roadblocks, and craters in the road that the tanks had to maneuver around. A tactic used by the Chinese was to hunker down and let the tanks go by, then open fire on the following vehicles. One of the main battle strategies the Chinese used was to dissect columns. To ward off such an attack, each occupant in the vehicles had to use maximum firepower.

About four miles north of Koto-ri, our attack came to a halt. Drysdale was told by the tank commander he believed the tanks could get through. However, with the road conditions and increased enemy fire, it would be costly to the rest of the task force if they proceeded. Enemy fire was taking its toll on the convoy. So, Drysdale radioed Hagaru-ri and reported his

situation. Due to the urgent need of reinforcements, General Smith had no choice and ordered him to proceed—at all cost.

The order was clear; the task force had to fight its way through the Chinese, or die trying.

This was around 1615 and by the time the tanks had finished refueling, darkness had set in. Nightfall brought the Chinese blowing their bugles and whistles, along with shooting flares. The first time one experiences this, it is unnerving. However, the Marines at Koto-ri had warned everyone in the column of these tactics.

The Chinese were getting bolder and coming closer to the column. Our grenades usually broke up these close-in attacks.

About halfway to Hagaru-ri, in a place later known as Hellfire Valley, a mortar round hit a truck, setting it on fire; thereby causing a roadblock. This split the column in two, without the front of the column realizing what had happened. The only radio communication available was through the tanks. Earlier on, runners had been used, but most had been killed or wounded.

This left the Army's Baker Company, sixty-one Commandos, and all of the Marine headquarter and service troops cut-off, and on their own. Little could be done to help them; many became casualties of the war. However, roughly three-hundred men and twelve tanks were able to fight there way back to Koto-ri.

When the head of the column was in sight of Hagaru-ri, it came under a heavy machine gun and mortar attack. One of the tanks was knocked out of action by a satchel charge. Quickly, the Marines formed a perimeter and fought off the attack. Wounded in the arm was Drysdale, but he stayed with his command.

As the column moved out things looked a lot brighter; the engineers in Hagaru-ri were using floodlights, as they were building an airstrip. When this scene came into our view, it raised the troop's spirits. However, as George Company neared the perimeter, it came under fire from tents that had been left by the 10th Engineer Battalion. Dressed in captured helmets and parkas, the Chinese opened fire on us. After a short firefight they scattered into the hills. We suffered unnecessary casualties, and loss of equipment.

One of the casualties was First Sergeant Rocco Zullo, a veteran of Guadalcanal and other World War II battles. In the summer of 1950, he helped form and train George Company at Camp Pendleton. There are very few men that are totally fearless in combat—he appeared to be one of them.

Zullo was cut down by enemy machine gun fire. The attending corpsman said he was dead, placing him in the tent with the other dead. An empty feeling came over his men. Many of his men—including myself—would not learn for another forty years what happened to him.

Another corpsman had gone into the dead tent and heard a cough. After investigating, he found Zullo—alive. Apparently the extreme cold had stopped his bleeding. Due to the number of casualties, and the chaos, around the hospital, word was never sent back to his company. He spent a year in the hospital and later retired from the Corps as a Captain.

Hagaru-ri had its reinforcements; sixteen tanks and 100 men from Company D, 1st Tank BN and A Company 5th Marines, less than 100 British Royal Marines, and 157 men from George Company. However, over half of the task force didn't make it to Hagaru-ri. The total loss was 321 men, 74 vehicles, and one tank. George Company suffered 23 percent casualties, the Commandos had 26 percent, and the Army's Baker Company had 63 percent.

It was around 1900 hours, and the men were frozen and exhausted. We had no hot shower, hot food, or warm beds waiting for us, only more ice and snow. Our drinking water and rations had frozen a long time ago. Our meal was going to be the same as it had been for days—Tootsie Rolls. We kept them inside our clothes to keep them from freezing.

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With the Royal Marines in reserve, at 0800 hours on the 30th of November, George Company began its attack on the deeply entrenched enemy on East Hill—at Hagaru-ri. Due to previous traffic, the hillside was nothing but a sheet of ice. Using our trenching tools, and bayonets, we chopped away at the frozen earth hoping to get better footing. It seemed for every two steps forward, we slid back one.

As we neared the top we were showered with an airburst of deadly shrapnel; my assistant, PFC Joe Rice, died in my arms. He had been hit in

the back of his head; I doubt he ever knew what hit him.

Exhausted, we set up our defenses for the night and a counterattack we knew would come. The first platoon was in the middle, with the second platoon over the crest to the right, and strung out down the hill on the left was the third platoon. Most of the men in George Company were unable to dig foxholes due to the ground being frozen. So, they either had to lie on top of the ground, or use dead Chinese for protection. During the wait, every man in the company shivered as the temperature reached thirty degrees below zero. A Chinese attack was a blessing, as it got our adrenaline pumping and our minds off the cold.

Captain Sitter moved among the young men to steady their nerves for the upcoming battle. He told them they were going to fight, and they must fight to survive. Fight they did!

Sometime during the night, thousands of Chinese came screaming, blowing their bugles and whistles, and shooting off their multicolored flares. Then suddenly, they set the hill ablaze with mortar, machine gun, and automatic weapons fire. My machine gun squad was attached to the first platoon and we soon came under heavy fire. I ordered my men to open fire. Suddenly, I realized the worst fear a man in combat can experience—my weapon wouldn't fire. The gun wouldn't respond to corrective measures, and by now the Chinese had begun to penetrate the lines. So, I quickly yelled for the men to use their grenades. This only temporarily slowed their advance, and soon their massive numbers caused a break in the first platoons section.

That night several Chinese had busted noses or bad headaches after I grabbed my helmet by the chinstrap and used it as a weapon. I then drew my .45 pistol, emptying a clip into the enemy. I heard an officer's voice, in the background, yell for the first platoon to pull back and join up with other defenders to seal off the break. This was the last time I saw any of my men on East Hill.

To reload my pistol, I dropped into a shell-hole that contained three-or-four motionless Marines. Quickly reloading my .45, I started to leave the hole when someone said, "Bob, don't leave me." I looked around and there lay Cpl. Dick Haller, squad leader of the other machine gun attached to the

first platoon. This meant both of the machine guns of the first platoon were out of action.

Having been shot in both legs, Haller was unable to walk. By this time the Chinese were everywhere and the Marines were engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Our only chance to safety was down the reverse slope of the hill. I grabbed Haller, by the hood of his parka, and headed for the slope. I slipped and stumbled numerous times, and emptied my last clip on the Chinese between us and the slope. Finally, we reached the slope as several Chinese approached us. With no more clips, I threw my .45 at them, yelling, "Shoot you bastards." I don't know if I hit any of them, or if any of them shot at us. Halfway down I jammed my left foot into a protruding rock, sending a sharp pain up my leg. After a short rest, I grabbed Haller and started back down the hill.

As we reached the bottom, a platoon of 41 Commandos was beginning to go up the hill to help seal the break. Standing by his jeep was PFC Jim Feemster, so I hobbled over and asked him to help me get Haller to sickbay. After loading him into the back of the jeep, we took off to get medical help. When we arrived, as soon as I exited the jeep, a bullet whizzed by and slammed into Feemster's right thigh—now I had two men to care for. Hobbling into sickbay, with these two wounded Marines, I asked a corpsman for help.

Before I could leave, a Navy surgeon told me to remove my shoepac. On the back of my heel was a knot the size of a golf ball—a ruptured Achilles tendon. He informed me that I was now out of action and would be flown to a hospital in Japan.

George Company suffered another 35 percent in casualties; they now had fewer than one-hundred men on the line. They continued to hold East Hill until the 5th of December, when they were relieved by the 5th Marines.

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After the battle at the Chosin Reservoir, the 1st Marine Division was put in reserve near Masan, South Korea. This is where I rejoined George Company in late January 1951.

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When they arrived at Masan, only sixty-seven of the original 255 men of George Company that landed at Inchon, answered the roll call. The company was refitted and ready for battle—again—by the end of January.

There was a division sized guerrilla force operating in the mountains around Pohang, South Korea; the division's first assignment was to eliminate it. This turned out to be a tedious task, but it was a good opportunity to train our new replacements. It helped get their combat legs in shape for the mountainous terrain that laid ahead. By early March we had accomplished our mission, and then we moved to the central part of South Korea to face the Chinese that were advancing deeper into the country.

During one stretch we were on the attack for forty-five days straight. This meant digging forty-five foxholes in forty-five days, but they were necessary for our protection. This was dirty and exhausting work, and we had little time or conditions for proper hygiene. Someone thought we had set a record for continued combat in the Marine Corps. Record or not, we smelled.

On the 21st of April, 1951, the 5th and 7th Marines were attacking abreast above the Hwachon Reservoir. To their left was the ROK 6th Division, and on their right was the Tenth Corps. No one was aware that the Chinese had amassed 350,000 troops, and on the twenty-second they hit the UN lines from the Hwachon on the east, to Munsan-ni on the west. This was the start of their spring offensive, and they stopped the UN advance in its tracks. The ROK 6th Division was one of the worst hit; they basically evaporated and the CCF's 40th Army poured across the line.

The Chinese probably thought if they could cross the Pukhan River they could encircle the 1st Marine Division, which was on the north side. Apparently, they didn't learn their lesson at the Chosin Reservoir.

The 3rd BN was in reserve near Chunchon, and was ordered to immediately saddle up and join the rest of the regiment. We were to take up a blocking position in an effort to help shore up the crumbling left flank.

Whoever controlled Hill 902 controlled all traffic across the Pukhan River via two ferries and the concrete Mojin Bridge. This was the only crossing for many miles. George Company's objective; take Hill 902. Also realizing its importance, the Chinese sent the 359th and 360th Regiments to take the hill. We were in a virtual foot race to the hill.

Getting supplies up this four-thousand foot mountain was going to be a problem, so everyone was told to carry extra mortar and machine gun ammo. Men struggled with their heavy loads, and many fell from heat and pure exhaustion. We won the race, but in doing so we consumed our water supply. Corpsman constantly moved among the men to be sure we were taking our salt tablets. For the next hour, stragglers kept arriving and we all knew we were in for a hot time that night.

The third platoon took the crest of the hill with the first platoon on their right, and the second platoon taking the left flank. In the rocky ground, we quickly prepared our defenses. We placed a heavy .30 caliber machine gun, along with two light .30's, on top of the hill. The heavy, and light, mortars and artillery zeroed in for action.

Shortly after dark all hell broke loose when the Chinese hit our lines. For the next several hours the fighting was frantic, and furious. Many of the Marines were using their entrenching tools, helmets, and even the butts of their rifles to hold off the Chinese. After receiving heavy losses, they broke off their attack—to regroup. During this interval, we removed our dead and wounded. The hill was littered with the bodies of dead Chinese, and some had to be removed so the machine guns had a better field of fire.

Around midnight Sgt. Peter Dusanowsky, the machine gun platoon leader, called me on the field radio to see how many casualties the first platoon had received. I informed him that our lines had not been hit. So, he instructed us to pull one of our guns off the line to reinforce the third platoon. The gun was placed on a small ledge above the heavy .30 caliber. The ledge had enough room for three guys, and had a good field of fire. This now put four machine guns in position for the next attack.

The Chinese attacked an hour after their third attack. The men on the recently placed light .30 saw the enemy first, from the lofty perch, and opened fire. Simultaneously the other guns followed suit, sending a blistering fire into the enemy. Then the mortars and artillery sprayed a wall of steel, breaking the back of the attack. Again, the Chinese broke off the attack to regroup.

One of the key players in the defense of Hill 902 was Gunnery Sergeant Harold E. (Speedy) Wilson, leader of the third platoon. He was wounded five times, receiving wounds in both arms thereby making it

impossible to fire a weapon. So, he went from foxhole to foxhole rallying his young men, and bringing them more ammo. He refused to be evacuated until he knew the battle was well in hand; he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions.

For their courageous stand on Hill 902, George Company's third platoon was relieved by the second platoon.

Orders came down for George Company to pull back across the Pukhan River; this was easier said than done. As we made the three mile descent to the bottom, the Chinese were breathing down our necks. The machine guns of the first platoon covered each phase of the pullback. The first priority was the roughly one-hundred dead, and wounded. Going out first was the walking wounded, followed by the dead—and litter cases—carried out on ponchos. On numerous occasions some of the men lost their footing on the steep slope, causing the bodies to fall off the ponchos. Needless to say, it was slow going.

The heat, and dust, left a dryness and thirst in one's mouths; several of the guys emptied their canteens on the climb up. Seeing the cool, running water of the Pukhan River—in the distance—only added to their thirst.

Finally, George Company made it to the river, but it came with a price. Later some of the men were diagnosed with stomach parasites, which they believed came from drinking water from the river.

* * * * *

In June of 1951, I left Korea. A year later—June of 1952—I left the Corps.

~~Twenty-One~~

Jack Chapman

31st Infantry Regiment

7th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

Prisoner of War

I was born on January 24, 1933, in Flat Rock, Oklahoma. At the age of fourteen, I dropped out of school, and by the time I was fifteen I had already traveled to California, Washington, and Michigan. I returned to Oklahoma and tried to find a job with the railroad company around Oklahoma City.

Not being able to get a job with the railroad, I made my way back to Muskogee, where my mother lived. After staying there for a few days, I was back on the road again. I hitch hiked to Tulsa, where I stayed with my uncle and Aunt Mary. She was full-blooded Cherokee and a small, beautiful lady with not a mean bone in her body.

After staying with them for a couple of weeks, I went to the nearest Navy Recruiting Office. I listed my age as seventeen and when I finished filling out all the necessary paperwork, they told me to come back the following day. When I returned, the recruiting officer told me I had lied about my age and for me to come back when I was older.

I tried the Army Air Corps; then three days after my birthday, I went to the Army Recruiting Office. All I needed was for someone to sign for me, since I didn't have a birth certificate. There were several guys being recruited, and several being drafted, into the Army. Since I was the only one that had signed up for the Air Corps, the rest of the guys talked me into joining the Army with them. So, we were shipped off to basic training at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas.

After completing basic training, I was assigned to the 14th RCT, Heavy Weapons Company (4.2 mortar) at Camp Carson, which was located

outside Colorado Springs, Colorado. Two guys in my platoon were veterans of the Second World War. The one from Mississippi called me aside one day and asked me my age. I replied, "Seventeen." He wanted to know if I was sure, because he said I looked awful young for seventeen. Again, I replied, "Yes, sir." That was the last I heard anything mentioned about my age—until I went to Korea.

We went to Alaska for two months of training and upon our return, my platoon was assigned to temporary duty at Camp McCoy, in Wisconsin. While there, I received orders for duty in Japan. After arriving in Japan, I was assigned to Dog Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division.

On June 25, 1950, North Korean Forces invaded South Korea. Six days later a battalion of the 24th Infantry Division was rushed to Korea.

At the start of the war, the 7th had been stripped of all but a few trained men to fill in the units that were headed to the Pusan Perimeter. More than half of our units were replacements fresh from the States.

Reports were coming in that the early American troops sent to Korea were being annihilated, and more were needed. The three regiments, and all support units of the 7th were soon on their way.

In September the UN launched a counter-offensive with the 1st Marine Division and the 7th making an amphibious landing at Inchon, South Korea; thereby cutting off retreating North Korean troops. Our first real encounter with the enemy came in the mountainous area of Suwon. After several heavy encounters, our leaders assumed that the arrival of a second wave of UN Forces would convince the commanders of the NKPA to high tail it back north. They did, but left guerrillas units behind.

It was near the end of September, and the UN authorized the crossing of the 38th parallel. In mid-October, the 7th was pulled out of action and moved south to the huge, but overcrowded city of Pusan. Here we took on replacements. Plans were being drawn up for a landing in the North Korean heartland. The Tenth Corps, which consisted of the 7th and the 1st Marine Division, was to make an amphibious landing at Wonsan, North Korea. The Eighth Army was to attack along the western side of the peninsula, going through the North Korea capital of Pyongyang. This way we could isolate the NKPA units from their support; thereby forcing them to surrender.

On, or about, the 8th of October we reached Pusan. Two days later there was a change in the plans. General Almond decided to land the 7th further north—at Iwon. It was 105 miles northeast of Wonsan, in the enemy's industrial region. We were then to proceed to the Yalu River—China's border.

The division, with all its equipment, had been packed and loaded onto ships. Our LST set sail from Pusan on, or about, the 27th of October. We continued northward in the chilly, winter waters off the eastern coast. Finally, two days later we made our landing at Iwon, which was not as difficult as the Inchon landing.

As we landed, the 17th Regiment moved inland to take the city of Pungsan, while the 31st Regiment was to their left and in the division's center. The 7th was to continue north striking through Pukchong on its way to Hysenjin—on the Yalu River. As we continued, morale was high and we still believed we would be home by Christmas.

By mid-November, elements of Tenth Corps had advanced to the Yalu with the orders, "under no circumstances were we to cross the Yalu River." By now the bitter North Korean winter was moving in on us, and we were hearing rumors of a tremendous build up of NKPA troops, along with the Chinese Peoples Army. Word came down that this was just a "save face" maneuver. However, our daily patrols began to report an estimated million Chinese Peoples Army had amassed along the border; however, they only seemed to have manpower and no equipment.

It was Thursday, November 23, 1950—Thanksgiving Day—and we were treated to a turkey dinner, with all the trimmings. The next day or so, my unit along with two heavy weapons squads of Company D were assigned to Capt. Charles Peckham's Baker Company. We received orders to advance to the Chosin Reservoir, not knowing the Chinese had already crossed the border. Prior to this, the Marines, and some ROK troops, had captured some Chinese soldiers—in their padded uniforms and wearing tennis shoes.

The 27th of November would bring the first of many Chinese attacks around the reservoir. They had thrown seven divisions around the reservoir and set up eleven roadblocks between Koto-ri and Hagaru-ri. And most of the bridges had been destroyed.

We moved out for Hamhung, where we received supplies and replacements. Around noon on the twenty-eighth we headed for Koto-ri, which was the location of the 1st Marine Division's CP. Arriving during the evening, we were tired and nervous, we tried to get some rest—in the bitter cold—without success.

For the second day in a row, the temperature hit twenty degrees below zero, and we weren't equipped for this kind of weather. I was wearing two pair pants, two shirts, and a field jacket—I still froze. Our C-rations were frozen, and we didn't stop long enough to thaw them out. Also, the extreme cold made out leather gloves so stiff the fingers wouldn't bend. So, I only wore the wool inserts to keep my hands from freezing to any metal part of my weapon.

On the 29th of November, we became part of Task Force Drysdale, which was named for Lt. Colonel Douglas B. Drysdale—the commander of the British 41 Independent Commando, Royal Marines. It consisted of 235 men of the Royal Marines, 205 men of the U.S. Marines (Capt. Sitter's George Company), 190 men of the 31st Infantry Regiment (Capt. Peckham's Baker Company), and approximately 82 U.S. Marines that included clerks, MP's, truck drivers and Navy Corpsman. The task force total 712 men, plus armor support. It's mission—to cut through the Chinese forces along the ten-to-fourteen mile road between Koto-ri and Hagaru-ri.

General Smith had ordered Colonel Chesty Puller to hold Hagaru-ri. Puller's Marines had their hands full defending the perimeter of Koto-ri.

At 0945 hours on the 29th of November, as a mist hung over the snow covered countryside, Task Force Drysdale moved northward. Behind the British Commandos was Baker Company. We were huddled-up in the trucks with our heads buried in our field jackets to protect us from the biting cold. Not hearing the small arms fire at first, suddenly mortar rounds began to fall, and then came the machine gun fire.

Quickly the drivers slammed on their brakes and the trucks came to a sliding stop on the icy road. Our truck came to a stop—on a narrow road—just as a grenade landed in the trucks bed, near my feet. Without thinking, I quickly grabbed it and threw it out of the truck. We bailed out, diving for a ditch along the side of the road. It really wasn't a ditch, more like a low

place between a railroad embankment on one side and the roadbed on the other.

The Chinese began lobbing mortar shells on us, along with raking the ditch banks with machine gun fire. We fought Chinese attacks throughout all hours of the night. However, due to distance, terrain, and other circumstances, we had no communication. So, neither the front nor rear of the convoy knew the middle of the column had been cut off. Those in the middle were us (Baker Company), some of the British Commandos, some Marines from the service and support units, and a detachment of Marine MP's.

As darkness set in we came under increasing enemy fire, and casualties continued to mount. We stacked the bodies around our speedily formed perimeter; the freezing temperature wasn't helping either. We tried to get our vehicles turned around and head back to Koto-ri, but we were unsuccessful.

I received my first wound on the twenty-ninth; a shrapnel wound to my left arm. It wasn't a serious wound, so I got it cared for and refused to go to Koto-ri. I returned to my squad and shortly thereafter received a shrapnel wound to my right leg. By this time the fighting was bad and one of the guys standing next to me was shot in the forehead, with the bullet embedding itself in his helmet.

When I went to the aid station, I found the corpsmen were too busy treating the more seriously wounded, so I returned to my position. About 2100 hours, on the twenty-ninth, the gunner sergeant from my squad jumped down from his weapon and refused a direct order, from Capt. Peckham, to return to his weapon. In front of the vehicle, the sergeant got down on his hands and knees, and started praying.

Without success the captain tried to find someone to take over the rifle, so I volunteered to do it. During the fighting, I received shrapnel wounds to my left leg and bullet wounds to my right leg and arm. With what was left of the 75mm recoilless rifle crew, they continued to fire at the enemy mortar flashes. Just as I finished reloading the rifle, I was hit above my eye—not getting a chance to fire it.

Hell Fire Valley, which was about one mile long and had very little cover, was the scene of an all night fight.

Ahead of us about fifty-to-one-hundred yards, were the remnants of Drysdale's Commandos, who were getting cut to pieces. Under the cover of darkness, the Chinese would make those nerve wracking screeches on their damn whistles and bugles, and then the onslaught would begin. They came in wave after wave, and the killing was furious. The Chinese climbed over the bodies of their own fallen men.

We shot down a whole line of them, only to have another line behind them. The second line had no weapons, so they stopped just long enough to pick up a weapon from a fallen comrade.

We had no weapon larger than the 75mm recoilless rifle. However, we did have 60 and 80mm mortars, but no shells. Our ammo was running low and we had no way of getting air support. You've got to understand what it feels like to be in combat and not have enough ammunition, or a weapon that doesn't work. That feeling is—helplessness.

Major John McLaughlin had assumed command of the ill-fated segment of the task force. By 0200 hours, on the thirtieth, his men were out of grenades and they were completely surrounded. As our guns lay silent, the major walked down the line of quiet men. He informed us that the Chinese had captured a G.I. and sent him back to tell us that if we didn't surrender in fifteen minutes, they would wipe us out.

The major asked the men what they wanted to do. If we said stay and fight—he would fight. After some debate, few of the men wanted to hold out until daylight when our planes would come back. However, the Chinese were so close our planes could not strike them without hitting us. With most of the men wounded, and the temperature dipping to twenty below zero, we were in dire need of medical care and shelter. Major McLaughlin had no choice—surrender.

He went away and a few minutes later, all along the railroad bank and across the narrow road—and even the hills beyond—the Chinese stood up. They were as close as thirty feet of our perimeter.

The Chinese were not familiar with our 75mm recoilless rifle. Earlier I had reloaded the rifle and before I was able to fire it, I was hit in the forehead; therefore, it was still loaded. One of the Chinese soldiers pulled the trigger, and the four officers standing at the rear of the rifle completely

disintegrated from the back-blast. Even though I was wounded, bleeding, and half conscious, I had the urge to smirk at our captor's.

There was a young soldier lying on the ground, next to me, who had half of his stomach blown away from a mortar round. As he cried, and screamed for help, the Chinese rolled him off the road to die.

After our capture, the wounded were ordered to board trucks. We thought we were being returned to our lines as requested by the major in the terms of the surrender. We soon found out that the Chinese had no intention of honoring such an agreement. They quickly herded all 143 of us into some farm houses. As I regained consciousness, my head, arm, and legs were in pain as if some one was sticking me with a hot pin. What I did not consider was the possibility that for the next thirty-two months and twenty days, I would be fighting just to survive.

I don't know how long we stayed here, but I've been told it was for one day and one night. When morning came, we were fed one can of corn for every five men; then we were herded outside for our miserable, unforgettable death march to our first prison camp at Kanggye, North Korea.

We marched back down to the road where we had fought in Hell Fire Valley. Many of the wounded were still there—slowly dying. Some of the prisoners took blankets from the trucks to cover their fallen comrades. The dead were still lying in the road, and in the ditch, where they had fallen—rigid from death and cold. Bodies of hundreds of dead Americans, and Chinese soldiers littered the frozen ground; the carnage around us was unbelievable. As we continued past this site, we crossed the road and moved out onto a frozen stream. Here we were forced to stand—on the ice—for hours before moving north.

We marched northwest towards P'Yongyang-Manojin railroad, and a place called Kanggye, which was roughly sixty-to-seventy air miles from where we were ambushed. Traveling mostly at night to avoid detections by allied aircraft, we covered a distance of 120-150 miles in nineteen days.

During the march we witnessed several deaths due to wounds, frozen feet, exposure to the weather, and from the hands of the guards. We received no medical care and were fed boiled sorghum, and on one occasion

a cold rice ball. Dysentery had become prevalent by the time we reached our destination.

For hours we marched until we stopped at a farm house that was located deep in the mountains. This is where we were stripped of all our personal belongings, pictures, wallets, ID cards, jackets and or overcoats. The only item I was able to keep were my dog tags, which I had taped together around my neck.

During the seventh or eighth day of our march, we were turned over to North Korean soldiers. They were given the assignment of escorting us to our final destination, and they were capable of and willing—to kill us. As we marched through the villages, the North Korean locals would come running out of their huts, and throw rocks at us. There was not one of us who went un-tortured.

Those too weak to continue, or didn't have the willpower, were left behind with a guard. We would hear gunshots and the guard, or guards, left behind soon returned to the group. I was very fortunate during our march to have been helped by an American Marine and a British Marine. They carried and dragged me over some of the most rugged mountain trails in North Korea. If it had not been for these valiant men, I surely would have died.

Our Chinese and North Korean guards gave no special considerations for the wounded; we were carried, or dragged, by other prisoners or just limped along as best as we could. I vividly recall the brutality that we suffered, men being pushed off the snow covered mountain trails, and being kicked and beaten with rifle butts. Many died, or were killed, on this march; we all had a sense of imminent death.

Finally, after nineteen days of marching, we reached our stopping place. It was located near the village of Kanggye, which was southeast of the Yalu and north of Chonch-on. It at least had some shelter to guard us from the cold, biting winds. This camp was used mostly as an interrogation center; from there we were sent to other camps along the Yalu.

Upon our arrival, we were taken to a hut—on the edge of the village—and the locals were moved into one room and we crowded into the other. When some of the prisoners took off their boots for the first time, after reaching the camp, the skin from their feet came off with their boots. A guy

by the name of Skinner, from Baker Company, lost his toes from both of his feet.

We were divided into squads and housed in Korean homes, which were made of mud and had no heat. They packed twenty-plus men into rooms that were roughly eight feet by eight feet. Since the homes had no heat, we huddled together to keep warm.

During the first few days we were so tired, and beaten, we hardly moved. We reached from underneath our jackets to get food the Chinese had poured into our ration cans. Those who had no cans used their caps. They fed us boiled sorghum, bean curd, etc...

After a few days, they moved us to the north end of town. Being divided into two companies, we again were housed in civilian homes. I was in a group with eight-to-ten Army personnel. The room next to ours consisted of about six or so Marines and one Navy Corpsman. Then we were informed that we would go through a period of schooling—to educate us on the true political situation in the world. After learning this, and to our captors' satisfaction, we would be returned home.

A record was kept on every man, including a photo ID. Their interrogations seemed to be more economic than military. We soon found ourselves arguing with the Chinese over the amount of our income, or the social status of our families. The Chinese seemed to be pleased, and less likely to argue, after we made a downward revision to our economic and social status. We started making up stories about having little to eat as children, and after our parents bought food they had no money to buy clothes; these stories seemed to please our Chinese captors.

By now the camp had grown to roughly 325 men, all suffering from wounds, the bitter cold, and malnutrition. The group consisted of men from the 41 Independent Commandos, some Puerto Rican soldiers of the 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division; however, the largest group was made up of soldiers from the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division. Some of the prisoners had been captured before we were.

The Chinese began their campaign to capture our minds. It was Christmas Eve and they decorated a barn with wreaths, candles, two Christmas trees, and even put up a sign bearing the cheerful inscription, "Merry Christmas." They also hung posters asking questions like, "Who is

responsible for you being away from your wives and families at Christmas time?" Another one read, "Why are you freezing and dying here in Korea, 5000 miles from home, on this Christmas Eve while your money mad bosses, the Capitalist Warmongers of Wall Street, are enjoying Christmas Dinner in their warm homes?" Some of these were amusing.

Each of us was given a handful of peanuts, six or seven pieces of hard candy, and six Chinese cigarettes. We sat on the earthen floor—for a while—before the Chinese officials walked to a stage and sat down. One of them got up and talked for two hours, in Chinese; not one of us understood a word he said. After he sat down, an interpreter stood up and, in English, repeated everything the first guy said. However, he first started by welcoming us to the peace camp of the Chinese Volunteers and how lucky we were to have been liberated by them; we were lucky because they had a lenient policy towards all people they liberated. He went on to tell us that our captors did not have to treat us well because no war had been declared by the U.S. and China, or the U.S. and North Korea. The more he spoke, the more resentful we became.

After his speech, a British soldier was picked out to lead the group in signing. Pausing for a moment, he launched into "God Save the King." Before the Chinese could understand what was happening, one of his fellow Marines warned him, so he quickly changed to "Roll out the Barrel."

We were soon to learn what their "lenient policy" entailed. It simply stated calculated leniency for cooperation; harassment in return for neutrality; brutality in return for resistance.

The camps high ranking official made it known to us they had planned a party for us on Christmas. They gave us a pork stew and white rice, which was the first meat meal we had since being captured. It was very good until we thought about the holiday meal our troops, in South Korea were being served, and then ours wasn't that enjoyable.

After Christmas we were marched to the barn, two or three times a week, for these brainwashing lectures. Our senior officer, Major McLaughlin, who was in direct opposition of the Chinese, began to establish communication with all our scattered groups. During our barn meetings, he was able to give instructions, advice, and encouragement to all

the men. His advice was always followed, and undoubtedly saved us from many hardships that we otherwise might have had to endure.

We continued this routine until about the 3rd of March, 1951, when we were suddenly shoved outside and marched from camp—to the town of Kanggye. Here some 290 men were loaded into boxcars for a two day journey to a place near Somidong—somewhere northwest of P'Yongyang. We only traveled at night and during the day we hid in tunnels, so we would not be detected by allied aircraft.

Three days after our arrival, we were all placed in a schoolhouse and told we would be split into two groups. The first group, which included sixty of us, without any explanation would be returned to the south. The second group, which consisted of the remaining 230 men including Major McLaughlin, was taken back north.

After leaving the larger group, we sixty men marched for about five weeks—covering about 300 air miles. We finally reached a point in the vicinity of Wonsan, North Korea; based on information obtained from the local civilians.

However, along the way two U.S. Marines became sick. One, an African-American named Leon Roebuck, died on March 12, 1951 from what appeared to be peritonitis. Using only our hands to dig his grave, we buried him in the middle of nowhere. The second Marine, having been carried for several days by Andrew “Chief” Aquirre, had become so sick the Chinese left him with the locals—he was never seen again. My shoes were beginning to fall apart to the point I was holding them together with rags, or what ever material I could find; so, the Chinese gave me Leon Roebuck's shoes to wear. We continued southwest through the rugged mountains of north central Korea, passing through Tokchon, Yangkok, and Majon-ni.

After leaving Majon-ni, on the 5th of April, 1951, we arrived at a temporary camp that was located in a village deep in a valley that could only be reached by foot. Seven days later, our group of fifty-eight would be split into two groups; one of twenty-eight, and thirty in the other.

From the group of thirty, the Chinese picked eighteen U.S. Marines and one Army soldier to be released. These nineteen were marched south a few miles, stopped, fed well, given pamphlets of peaceful aims of the

Chinese, surrender leaflets that they were to hand to their comrades when they caught up with them, then they were released.

The remaining men were brought back north where they rejoined our group. The four Marines that returned were, Sergeants Mathis and Roberts, Cpl. Aquirre, and PFC Daniel Yesko. It was during this time that many of us began to physically suffer more. My wounds had begun to bother me, and from the knees down my legs were in excruciating pain. During the nights the pain became more intense, so I got very little sleep.

We arrived at a deserted village after several days of moving around, and dodging allied planes. Here, the Chinese removed a sergeant and a private from our group, which we didn't view as much of a loss. Ever since our capture, both of these guys were suspected of ratting guys out to our captors; these two were favorites of the Chinese. They received better treatment, and always had cigarettes. No one trusted these two.

Near the end of May 1951, we met approximately two-hundred American soldiers that had been captured a month earlier around Seoul. Most of them belonged to the 24th and 25th Infantry Division's.

Roughly ten days later, the Chinese moved our group away from the other's and marched us toward the Hwachon Reservoir. They marched us until August, then we were taken to a village where we stayed for about a month; then we moved again, heading back north. At our next stop they moved Ray Hikida from our group; we didn't see him again until the end of the war.

Next, we headed to a place called "The Mining Camp," which was near P'Yongyang. This is where the Chinese collected prisoners and when they had a large group, would walk them to various camps lining the Yalu River. While here we met some newly captured prisoners; their clothes looked fairly new, not torn or ragged like ours. They kept their distance and looked at us suspiciously, as if they didn't care for us. However, they began to warm up to us after they found out how long we had been captured.

We never had problems with the dispensing of food until now. Being in such a large group, it had become dog-eat-dog. A lot of the new prisoners still had their canteens, and canteen cups. When the guard left the food container on the floor, it was chaos with the newer guys filling their cups. Us older ones didn't stand a chance; our cups would only hold about a

fourth of the canteen cups. Many of the prisoners, especially the wounded, got nothing to eat.

Daniel Martinez, a staff sergeant from Dog Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, immediately took charge of the group. He asked how many didn't get anything to eat that morning—several prisoners raised their hands. Continuing on, he told us that we were all soldiers and still in the military, but some had forgotten this and were acting like animals. He told us that when the afternoon food arrived, everyone would line up in orderly fashion and two guys would dish out the food. And that he, the two guys, and a group standing behind him, would see that everyone received an equal share—no one challenged him.

Allied planes had wrecked havoc on Chinese supplies, so now our food ration consisted of course, brown flour that we mixed with water to make a mush which provided no nourishment and was almost inedible. Due to supplies being low we formed a work detail and twice a week traveling at night, walked roughly twenty-five miles to obtain food.

Being forced to carry fifty pound sacks of grain back to camp on our shoulders caused some to fake illness; thereby, placing a bigger burden on the rest of us. Each time we stopped at these temporary camps for more than three days, about ten-to-fifteen of us were singled out for these food runs.

In August of 1951, our temporary camp was a North Korean farm about one-hundred miles south of Kanggye. The farm was occupied by a family of four, the husband, wife, son and daughter-in-law. Their house was an average Korean home that had three rooms. Our Chinese guards took two of them, one for the officers, and the other for the seriously ill prisoners and our two officers. The rest of us slept outside, on the ground, in the cattle stalls, which in itself wasn't bad—away from the bugs, lice, and smell.

One day the husband killed a deer and he skinned and quartered it as we watched. As he quartered it, he would cut off pieces and throw them to his small dog; the rest he put away. As the family gathered in their room that evening with the door opened, some of us fantasized about how that deer would taste. The husband walked to the door looking around outside; he then returned and resumed eating his deer. Several times he would cut

off a piece and throw it at us. It's hard to believe how low we had come in order to survive.

During September 1951, as we were being marched north, we saw hundreds of Chinese soldiers moving to the rear, but only a handful of North Korean soldiers. Finally, after marching for several days, we stopped in a large valley that we named AWOL Valley. It was here that nine of us attempted to escape, only to be recaptured, beaten, and bound for long periods of time. This place was infested with fleas.

While at AWOL Valley, we were joined by several American prisoners who had been captured during late spring, or early summer. We also saw fellow prisoners being mistreated, some with their hands tied behind their backs, others had their wrist tied and hung from poles or anything else available. It was still September and our group was again marched north to the city of P'Yongyang—one of the most miserable, and unforgettable prisoner of war camps in all of North Korea.

The city was a complete wreck when we arrived. Allied aircraft had reduced their industry to rubble. And the smell of death hung in the air as it clung to your skin—as though something was crawling on you. Graves lined the hillside by the hundreds; graves that were so shallow, arms and legs protruded from the earth. Men were so sick they couldn't care for the dead, and dying. Bodies remained where they had died, inside and outside their cells with nothing to cover them. The filth is indescribable. The smell inside the huts, and cells was unbelievable. Everywhere one looked he saw horrible things.

We left this place around the 12th of October, and I was never so glad to leave a place in all my life; again we marched north. As we traveled during the night, the roads were congested with Chinese soldiers, trucks, and pack animals headed south—to the front lines.

As we journeyed on, one of our English speaking Chinese captors—Wong—wore a black arm-band on his sleeve, so we called him the “Black Arm Bandit.” Wong pushed several prisoners off the trail during our march. He was the one who did the punishing at our next camp.

Now malnutrition was beginning to take its toll on us. We were now down to one meal a day, which was mainly a very small portion of millet. All of us were suffering from very painful muscle deterioration; this is

when one's muscles would stiffen up, causing first mild then extreme pain from the tip of our toes to the tops of our heads.

The Chinese said we had been spotted by American planes, so we stopped in a tunnel. Due to the heavy smoke from the train, we almost suffocated. Since our train had been spotted, we were forced to march the rest of the way. During our march, we were strafed several times by allied aircraft.

As we neared the end of our march, we saw many Russian trucks. We then marched into the city of Sinuiju, North Korea—I believe this was the name of the city. The locals lined the road to see us, spit on us, throw rocks at us, and even tried to hit and kick us. Our Chinese guards did their best to protect us from the locals.

When we approached the outskirts of the city, we passed by some Russian manned ack-ack batteries; the Russians gave us some bread.

On, or around, the 25th of October 1951, we arrived at Camp One after a thirteen day journey. The camp was located in the town of ChangSong, North Korea, which was about thirty miles northeast of Sinuiju. When we arrived, I remember seeing American prisoners locked in dark, stinking cells for solitary confinement. These men had been placed there due to an infraction of camp rules, or they had gone insane from the pain or infection of their wounds. Our captors had crudely removed bullets, amputated limbs, and then placed these men in solitary confinement for months—to live or die.

Upon our arrival, it was bitter cold and our Chinese guards kept us standing around for hours, so we could be assigned living quarters. We registered at the Guard Headquarters the next day, then we were placed in squads and huts in the seventh compound. Here they placed ten-to-twenty men to a room. Our room had a dirt floor and the walls plastered with mud. Compared to other living arrangements—this was much better.

The housing arrangements was that of a typical Korean home, straw roof, mud walls, paper windows (in doors only), and an earthen floor kitchen that had an old black kettle for cooking and heating water. Even though the rooms weren't very large, there was enough room to lie down, and stretch out. In one wall was an opening that served as a window; however, instead of glass, it had a piece of light brown paper glued to the

inside of the opening, and it let through very little light. When it turned colder, our breath caused condensation on the paper making it wet and when the wind blew, it would tear. All prisoners had the same kind of room—cold and drab.

Our compound consisted of approximately two-hundred American soldiers and Marines, who were starving and suffering from their wounds and other illnesses. The first week here, we were given a blanket—the first since being captured—for every two men. Located to our south was another compound that was separated from us by a barbed wire fence. It contained the same number of prisoners as us, and they were in the same condition.

Running through the center of camp was the main road that was used as the main supply route. On several occasions our planes strafed Chinese trucks as they used the road. During these strafing's several of our men were wounded, including Roy Farley who received a shrapnel wound to his foot. There were no markers indicating this town was being used as a POW camp, so our pilots had no idea we were there. We finally were able to get the Chinese to put up a marker—six months, or so, later.

From the time of our capture, we had experienced near-starvation on several occasions. At least here we were getting two small meals a day. The food, which was mostly consisted of barley and millet, was brought to us in a bucket and served to us like pigs. One day we happened to find a dead chicken, and cooked it, not caring how rotten or diseased it was; everyone in my squad tried to get a piece of that cooked meat.

If we had to go to the latrine, which was located about ten feet behind the huts, we would be challenged by the guards in front and back of the huts; they stayed with us until we returned to our room. We soon learned that their eyes were also bad at night—from night blindness—that was caused by the lack of nutrients. Night blindness varied from a small dot, to total blindness; I could not see anything at night. If we had to go to the latrine during the night, we had to be led by the hand. What a sight! A line of grown men holding hands as they went to the toilet.

It was my 20th birthday, and my friends surprised me with a small dish of food prepared from small bits that they had stolen from local farmers, after a day's labor in the hills. This is a birthday I shall never forget.

Here, the Chinese performed operations, removed bullets, amputated limbs and toes, without the use of anesthetic. During the winter of 1951-52, I remember one of our fellow prisoners—Red Campbell—feet was frozen so badly he could not walk. The Chinese amputated the toes on both of his feet with an old pair of scissors. After which, they gave him no medication for the pain, or infection. When they finished cutting off his toes, they turned him loose in the compound; he ran around—screaming in pain—on his bloody, swollen, and blackened feet. He went out of his mind, and was no longer able to recognize anyone in the compound. The Chinese moved him to another location, and we never saw him again.

Once again they started their brainwashing classes. A Chinese officer, who spoke English, would go to each hut with newspapers from Shanghai and Peking, which were printed in English. Articles in these newspapers were mainly about how the United States and the United Nations were to blame for what was happening in Korea. Even the interrogations started again; harassment, deception, and writing personal histories were some of the techniques they used. They would come and get us at odd hours of the day, wake us from our sleep at night, or take us during meal time for interviews.

For disobeying an order, one would have to write a self-criticizing confession. If you refused, you would be interrogated and, or, have to stand at attention for hours—at night. One guy from our group was put in a dug-out for a month—or longer—for back talking a Chinese officer.

Needless to say, we hated these damn lectures and discussions. They lasted from six-to-eight hours a day; even longer if they weren't getting what they called the right answers. Nearly after a month of negative results, they gave up and started smaller study groups—consisting of volunteers. [*Two men from Jack's compound refused to return home after the war. Even though Jack mentions them, the author refuses to recognize them with the brave men and women mentioned in this book, and along with those who served.*]

In early spring of 1951, several of us got together and formed what we called "True American" better known to the Chinese as "Reactionaries." Even though we were still located in the seventh compound, we helped plan escapes.

We went on work details during the day and carried what food we could spare, into the hills and hide it. We helped gather whatever items we would need for anyone willing to escape, and provided a distraction for the guards. Unfortunately, there was no successful escape from Camp One. However, a Marine named Flores who had been captured at Chosin was gone the longest—that I knew of. He was recaptured by a Soviet anti-aircraft unit.

In April 1952, the Chinese informed us that we would be marching in a May Day Parade that would go through the center of ChangSong. We passed the word around, to those we could trust, not to march in the parade—everyone agreed.

We had been issued blue summer uniforms a week before the parade. The uniform consisted of a light-weight, shirt type jacket and baggy trousers. This was the first time we had been issued any clothing since our capture; they also gave us a hair-cut and shave.

Somehow we had managed to write the letters POW on the back of our new jackets, and hid them until the day of the parade. Our plan was for no one to move after we had been lined up, but before we could carry it out a progressive ran and told the Chinese our plans. We were all herded together and once again told about their leniency policy.

It was now May 1, 1952 and the Chinese herded us onto the main road for the parade. We were all dressed in our new blue uniforms when they noticed the letters POW on the backs of our jackets—they were very upset. They lectured us about destroying clothes that Chinese people had made. When they began to assemble us into formation, except for a couple of guys, everyone in my squad sat down and refused to move. After getting us back in formation, we again sat down. Now they forgot about their “lenient treatment” and started pushing us around; they proceeded to tell us what would happen to us if we didn’t obey—still no one moved.

They began to scream, and pull each one of us to our feet. After getting some to their feet, others would set down. Finally, a Chinese officer who was in charge, called for more guards; now they brutally forced us to walk down the main streets—with kicks and shoves.

When the parade was over, they herded us together again lecturing us on their “lenient policy.” They went on to tell us we would be severely

punished if we continued to act this way. The progressive who told on us was kept under guard, at the Chinese headquarters, for several days for his own protection. When he returned to our compound, he was badly beaten by members of our group. After this, it was rumored he was given a knife to protect himself.

We labored in the mountains, cutting timber. Then we had to carry the logs for miles down the mountains, with two and sometimes three-or-four guys to a log. The wood was used for fuel, to cook with, and by the Chinese.

Some of us, at the south end of camp, were often taken to a Korean farm where we had to grind grain. The farmer had an ox-powered mill, but no ox. Thereby, we had to take turns turning the grinder—round and round.

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During August 1952, Company Seven was broken up and several of us were transferred to Company Four, which was located at the north end of ChangSong. Daniel Yesko, Bill Carter, Bobby Gene Rains, along with several others were moved to another camp, further north.

While here everyone suffered from dysentery and beriberi. Also, there were cases of malaria, jaundice, and bone fever. Many men would just lie down and stare into space, refuse to eat, until they were found dead; it was easier to die, than live. One of our friends refused to eat, so we told him, “Just go ahead and die. We will help your wife spend your insurance money when we get out of here.” This made him mad, and he pulled out of it.

For a short period of time, in Camp One, we had a Chinese woman doctor, who was about thirty years old and spoke English. She helped several GI’s and British prisoners, then one day she disappeared from camp; no one ever knew what became of her. Instead of ending up in “boot hill,” outside of Camp One, a lot of men were able to return home because of her.

After our arrival, and until we were released, at Camp Four a few of us paraded around pretending to be playing imaginary instruments; or taking our imaginary dogs for a walk. One day a friend, Bob Blewitt, told one of the guards that my imaginary dog bit him on the leg. Not understanding a word that Bob was saying, he called for an English speaking officer. After the officer arrived, Bob explained to him that my dog bit him. The officer

wanted to know what dog? Bob said, “There he is, can’t you see him?” Before the officer could answer, Bob yelled out, “Jack, don’t let your dog piss on him.” Quickly the officer grabbed his pant leg, and we broke up laughing. The Chinese soon informed us we could no longer have dogs in the compound. They thought all of us were crazy.

With winter coming we were issued a blue cotton padded jacket, pants, an overcoat, and a pair of padded tennis shoes. They were warm; however, we wore them all through the winter without ever washing them. Needless to say, when spring arrived they were so filthy and stunk so badly, we could hardly stand them.

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The Chinese were very skillful in their torturing of us. One of their favorites was to have us stand at attention while holding our arms straight out—for hours. If we dropped them, they would strike our arms. Then they would have us sit for hours, at attention, on our little stools that after a while became very miserable. There were also many instances of individual brutality, solitary confinement, beatings, being exposed to the cold, and to have our food and water withheld.

There were two kinds of confinement; one that restricted you to a small area with other prisoners and the other was in individual cells. The cells measured approximately two-and-a-half feet by five feet, and had earthen floors with no bedding. Your only companions were the friendly rats.

Before one was placed in solitary confinement, he was tried by a so-called “Kangaroo Court” for alleged crimes against the Chinese and or local civilians. After spending a couple of months in confinement, one resembled someone out of the caveman days with shaggy beards and a long coarse mess of hair. Our skin was pitted from digging for lice, or any other bug and our walk was unsteady.

They often tied our hands to our feet with rope, or whatever material that was available. Whatever they used, they tied it so tight it would cut off your circulation, or cut into your skin; causing one to lose consciousness. With temperatures dipping below twenty degrees, some prisoners were

marched barefooted onto a frozen river and at the same time had water poured over their feet.

One day I was pulled from morning formation and was made to stand at attention in front of the compound until late in the afternoon; I was given no food or water. However, one of my friends brought me some food and water, but the guard confiscated it and threw it on the ground.

* * * * *

In 1951, the subject of bacteriological (germ) warfare was nothing new in the Korean War. At times the Chinese came to our huts making us cover our mouths, as the U.S. was using germ warfare. They claimed that the U.S. Air Force had dropped diseased flies, fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, and spiders.

Needless to say, there is very little humor in the daily routine of a POW camp. However, there at times when schemes are developed to antagonize our captors and to help maintain our sanity. One played into the Chinese's paranoia of germ warfare.

Two American officers made a tiny parachute and drew the Air Force insignia on it. Then a dead mouse was attached to the shroud lines, and hung on a bush for the Chinese to find. The guard who found it screamed so loud, it brought the camp officials running. One of the guards, using tongs, carefully removed the mouse from the bush, placing it in a glass container. As proof of their theory about the U.S. using germ warfare, the container was put on exhibit in a nearby school. The Chinese never realized they were the butt of what the whole camp thought was a hilarious practical joke.

* * * * *

When the Chinese took over ChangSong so they could use the town as a POW camp, they ran the Korean families into the surrounding hills. Many of these families were friendly to us, giving us tobacco, and other useful items. The Chinese never knew about this.

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The Chinese took one of the classroom buildings in our compound and turned it into a club house. During an argument between a couple of prisoners and the chairman of the so called "Peace Committee," threats

were made to burn down the club. The chairman said if anyone tried, they would be confined. Needless to say, a few nights later, the club house was set on fire. Immediately, the two men who had argued with the chairman were singled out and placed in solitary confinement—on a water diet. Even though these were the wrong two guys, they were removed from our compound. To this day, very few men know who set the building on fire.

Following this incident, I and several others were harassed for several weeks by the Chinese. We were taken from our huts to the guard headquarters to be interrogated. During one of these sessions, I was shown a signed statement from another prisoner, which listed my name along with several others involved in undesirable activities. They told me that if I provided a written statement about my, and others, activities that I would not be harmed. After three hours of denying any knowledge of these activities, I was taken back to my hut.

Several nights later, I was taken back to the guard headquarters. This time they offered me cigarettes as they explained they had more statements about my activities. However, they told me if I would give them a written statement they would forget about the incident. Again, after three hours of silence, they took me back to my hut.

During formation the following morning, I was made to stand at attention in the corner of a building that had a low ceiling—I stood there all day. As I continued standing there, my legs and back ached so bad I wanted to cry. However, I wasn't going to give in and let them see me in pain. Boy was I relieved when I was allowed to return to my hut and sit down.

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In March of 1953, the Chinese started giving us better food as the Peace Talks seemed to be going fairly well. In April an exchange of sick prisoners took place; this was called Operation Little Switch. Approximately 6000 Chinese and North Koreans prisoners were exchanged for approximately six-hundred Allied personnel, which included one-hundred forty-nine Americans. Among the prisoners released from our compound, I knew David Ludlum, James Coogan, and Virgil Kaver.

This exchange of prisoners was great news; we had lived for the day when we would hear those words, and our hopes grew that the rest of us

would soon be released. We were assembled in the compound on July 27, 1953 and told that an armistice had been signed at Panmunjan; we all shouted, hollered, and cried—we knew we would soon be going home.

After hearing this great news, we were allowed to visit other compounds in our camp, and visit our old friends for the first time since our arrival. Roughly a week before the exchange started, we received our first Red Cross package. Each prisoner was issued a carton of cigarettes, a comb, a razor, and a bar of soap. These were good old American cigarettes. Not being allowed to see or talk with any member of the Red Cross, all items were given to the Chinese, who then passed them on to us.

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Operation Big Switch began on August 5th, and with the exchange in process we saw trucks with prisoners from camps up north pass through our camp every day. We waved to these men as they headed south.

I saw friends of mine leaving everyday and I began to wonder when my name would be called. As the Chinese read off a list of names, those men boarded trucks and headed south—to freedom. Everyday I said good-bye to friends as they left.

Still my name had not been called, as Camp One was becoming deserted. Those of us still remaining began to fear we were not going to be released. Finally, some of us were told that we would never return home; we would be staying in Korea.

About two weeks later a member of the International Red Cross came to Camp One asking to see some American prisoners. Apparently, a British soldier had informed them that some of us were still being held here.

On the morning of August 18th, the remaining prisoners—including myself—of Camp One were told we would be leaving for Panmunjon. We boarded two trucks for our journey south, to freedom. Needless to say, we were all very happy that the International Red Cross had intervened or who knows when we would have been released—if ever.

As we headed south we passed many trucks headed north carrying Chinese and North Korean prisoners. They were all standing up in the back of the trucks and they were all rosy cheeked, hog jawed, and fatter than hell.

After looking at my skinny arms and legs, I glanced at the guards seated in the back of our truck; we were nothing more than walking sticks.

One of our English speaking guards told us that the returning Chinese prisoners would have to be re-educated before returning to China. They would also have to be re-brainwashed before seeing their families, because the United States had warped their minds.

Just north of Freedom Village we stopped at the release point and our guards jumped from the trucks, and tried to shake our hands; we told them to go to hell. Soon, our own troops arrived, opened the gates, and said, "Welcome Home."

As we headed to the exchange point, we began removing our prison clothing. An American MP informed us there were women present, so we were told to keep our pants on. They loaded us into ambulances for the remainder of our trip to Freedom Village. As soon as the Village came into sight, we all got a lump in our throats and tears in our eyes. We were met by a chaplain, who led us in prayer.

I was met by an American Lt. Colonel whose first words were, "Here comes the reactionaries." He then asked me what I would like to have.

I replied, "A dish of ice cream."

They took us to the Red Cross for refreshments, which consisted of ice cream, milk, coffee and cigars. This was all we could have, because we weren't used to rich food; they told us a meal would be waiting.

We then were allowed to shower after which we were sprayed with DDT, given clean pajamas, and time to relax. Later, I looked at my first decent meal in thirty-three months—roast beef, peas, mashed potatoes, and a lettuce salad. After eating we had the opportunity to meet with newspapermen; however, it was strictly up to us if we wanted to meet with them.

After meeting with the press they issued us clean clothes and new boots. Having worn tennis shoes for about two years, it was comical walking in hard sole shoes. So, we had to learn to walk all over again. We were then taken to a helicopter pad and flown to Inchon. Landing at Inchon we were warmly greeted, fed a good supper, and assigned a clean bunk for

the night. The following day we were given some back pay and allowed to shop at the Post Exchange.

On the morning of August 21st, we loaded onto buses and were taken to the pier. Here we boarded a ship for our voyage home.

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Upon our arrival at San Francisco, I hadn't figured on anyone being there to meet me. As I disembarked—in my Class A uniform—and began to board the bus for Camp Stoneman, I heard my name called over the load speaker. The voice on the speaker said I had visitors. I was surprised—who would be meeting me? As I walked into the visitors area, I was shocked to see my youngest uncle and his wife, and a small child standing there crying, and my great aunt. My uncle and I hugged. For how long—I don't know. He was crying, and I had tears in my eyes as well.

After my authorized leave was over, I reported to my new duty post—Fort Sill, Oklahoma—on October 9, 1953. At our new post, there was not one person who gave a damn about us; we were treated like outcasts. A week after our arrival, we were given our discharge papers.

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Fourteen months later I tried to re-enlist, but the Army turned me down—I failed their physical. However, I was accepted into the Air Force, and after fifteen and a half years I retired.[\[3\]](#)

~~Twenty-Two~~

Rex Raymond

USS Haven – AH-12

U.S. Navy

Less than five years after the end of the Second World War, the Korean War broke out. With not too many men left to go to war, the government asked high school kids to go sign up. At the age of seventeen I was eager to go to war, but what does a seventeen year old know?

Having always being interested in the water, and ships, I joined the U.S. Navy during my junior year of high school. Not having ever been away from home before, I went to San Diego for my basic training. From there I was transferred to Tongue Point, Astoria, Oregon, but didn't know why until later. Here I received training on LCM's (Landing Craft Machinery). These were the ones whose bows opened up.

After my training was over, I was transferred to the *USS Haven*—a hospital ship. She was to replace the *USS Benevolence*, who had sunk under the Golden Gate Bridge after being rammed—during a heavy fog in August 1950—by a freighter.

The *Haven* was docked in San Diego when I went aboard. She was beautiful; all white with red crosses. She had a seven-hundred bed hospital, equipped with two operating rooms. A few weeks after we set sail, we reached Korea—what a sight. The worse place on earth I had ever seen. People begging in the streets, women on the beach picking up anything that moved—to eat, kids that were homeless, buildings and homes blown up.

There was a boy being treated on the ship, which I fell in love with. He had a broken arm and bad legs. His parents had been killed, so I took him under my wings; his name was Lee Kom Poo. Eventually he was taken and placed in an orphanage—I never heard from him again.

The *Haven* was anchored in the bay, while the fighting ships were miles away. As they shelled Inchon in preparation for the invasion, we could see and hear the shells all night long as they passed over the ship.

There was a helicopter pad on the ship in case a soldier needed immediate medical attention. We had a small boat the circled underneath the fantail just in case a helicopter didn't reach the landing pad.

There was one thing they forgot to tell us, our boat had no guns for our protection. However, we were given a plastic card from the Geneva Convention, in case we were captured. If so, we were to show our captors (with the guns) our cards and we would be okay. They would read a card we gave them, written in English and not hurt us. Right!

Inchon Harbor has the second highest tide change in the world, thirty-two feet, and we were anchored there. The training I received in Astoria was as an engineer on a boat—now I knew what I had been trained for. A coxswain, a bow man, and myself were given a boat and told our job was to go to the beach and pick up the wounded and dead. M.A.S.H. units and corpsman would bring them to the beach and it was our job to get them to the *Haven*. We did this day and night, as needed. On one trip, as we were approaching the beach in rough water, our bow man—Delbert Earwood—fell off and we never found his body; he was only eighteen.

When we arrived at the beach, there would be over one-hundred men lying there waiting for us to take them to the ship. Blood was everywhere. Men crying and begging for help; some had their limbs and other body parts missing. As I looked at their faces, I soon realized they were the same age as me—eighteen. Men were screaming, “Save me! Will I live?”; others asking God for forgiveness. Before we left the ship, we were told no matter how bad these men were we were to tell them they looked good.

We did this day after day until the ship was full. When she was fully loaded, she set sail for Japan—taking the wounded to hospitals there. In our absence, a small Swedish hospital ship would go into the harbor until we returned; then back to the beach we went.

After the fighting during the invasion was over, our job for days was to go around in the harbor and pick up dead soldiers that were floating in the water. When shot these men sank to the bottom of the bay with their backpacks and rifles. Several days later their bloated bodies would rise to the surface. As we maneuvered our boat along the water, we placed large plastic bags in the water guiding the bodies—with boat hooks—into the

bags. We then zipped up the bags and returned to the ship where they were prepared to be shipped home.

On many occasions, with a boat load of wounded, we missed the tides. This caused the boats water inlet, which cooled the engines, to pick up mud and plug up the strainers. There we were in the middle of the bay, with our engines stalled, and two-hundred or more wounded men crying, moaning, and some even dying. Here I was, an eighteen year old not knowing what life was about—with death all around me—trying to unclog the strainers. Without a shadow of doubt, I believe the Lord was with me the whole time I was in Korea.

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In September 1954, after being on the front line for so long, the *Haven* was sent on a world mercy cruise—picking up more than seven-hundred wounded French Foreign Legionnaires in Saigon, French Indochina. We finally arrived at Long Beach, California—our home port—on November 1, 1954; sixty days and 30,000 miles after we left Yokosuka, Japan.

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I saw and did things that I will never forget, and things I don't like to remember. During my time in Korea I kept a daily log. If my day was bad, I wouldn't talk or write about it. My entry would be how the weather was—good, bad, or very bad. According to my log, I had twenty-eight months of bad weather.

During these twenty-eight months, I threw up many times.

~~Twenty-Three~~

Robert Grass

11th Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

I was born in Troy, Indiana, on September 26, 1924. The day the United States declared war on Japan—December 8, 1941—at the age of seventeen, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps. That Monday morning, along with three buddies, I arrived at the post office in Evansville, Indiana—before it opened—to enlist. After we were sworn in, they told us we would be leaving the following morning for Parris Island, South Carolina. Shortly afterwards they informed us the camp was overflowing with new recruits, and that we wouldn't be leaving until the 29th of December.

Finally, we arrived at Parris Island for our three months of basic training. It is located on the Atlantic coast and at night it got pretty cold with the winds blowing off the ocean. However, after only being there a month, they boarded us on ships and sent us to Guantanamo Bay. During the early part of the Second World War, German U-boats patrolled the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and there was a concern they may attempt to take over Guantanamo. So, we went through the rest of our basic training here. After we finished, we again boarded a ship, but not to return to Parris Island; we sailed through the Panama Canal headed for New Zealand.

The 1st Marine Division was scattered throughout the States and other parts of the world. The entire division would meet in New Zealand, where we all went through more training. We didn't have a clue where we were headed, but with the training we knew it was going to be an island. And we were right; on August 7, 1942 we landed at Guadalcanal.

During my time in the south Pacific, I was in eight amphibious landings; the last being Guam. I returned home and on December 8, 1945, I was discharged from the Corps.

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On January 31, 1948, Vernia June Polk and I were married in Evansville, Indiana. I got a job working for ADT, and wanting to make a little more money I enlisted in the Marine Reserve in 1949. There were about one-hundred twenty-five men in the rifle company I joined, and about 95 percent of the guys had no combat experience. The only experience they had was the one or two weeks of training at various camps, which I didn't have to do.

On the 25th of June, 1950, war broke out in Korea and they activated our company. I went and talked to the captain telling him that Vernie and I had two children, and I wanted to know if I would have to go. He told me that he didn't believe I would be able to get out of it—he was right. Since my income was all the money we had coming in, Vernie and the children went to live with my parents.

When my brother Ralph, heard I was going over, he joined the Marines so he could be with me. The only time we were together was during the two days I was at Camp Pendleton before I shipped out.

The Army and ROK units had been pushed all the way back to Pusan, and there was concern they may be pushed all the way into the sea. So, the Navy had ships ready to evacuate them if necessary. However, they would not be needed as they began to break out of Pusan and started driving the NKPA back north.

When we arrived in Japan, we were informed of MacArthur's plan to land at Inchon. We were to cut across to Seoul and cut off the retreating NKPA. Our company would not be making the landing at Inchon; however, we would be flying into Kimpo Airfield, which was about ten-to-twelve miles outside Inchon. After the 5th Marines had landed and secured Inchon, they were to secure the airfield so we could land. At 3:30 AM on the 19th of September we landed. However, only one end of the airfield had been secured at that time. Once we disembarked, we came under enemy fire and of all the men aboard, there were only seven combat veterans. We finally secured the airfield and headed towards Seoul.

Before we entered Seoul, they pulled me back and put me in charge of three squads, or thirty-three men. We had to protect a ten mile area to stop,

or accept the surrender of the NKPA and keep them from going north. All I could do was send out scouts to see which way they were coming and set up a perimeter. We set up our machine guns and saturated the area with as many men as we could. The North Korean soldiers were surrendering by the hundreds; they didn't even have any weapons. However, there were some die-hards who tried to get back, but we took care of them.

After a few more stragglers came in to surrender we then made a beeline to Seoul. When we arrived, who was there? MacArthur himself, and with him was Syngman Rhee. The city was only about three-quarters secured, but that didn't stop him from coming. He held a ceremony in which he presented Syngman Rhee with a "wooden" key to the city—symbolizing we had taken the capital back. Then MacArthur had everyone remove their hats, place their hand over their heart, and recite the Lord's Prayer—as he led us.

Now we were at the 38th parallel and didn't know if the war was over or what—it wasn't over. MacArthur decided to chase the NKPA all the way to the Yalu River. So, we—the 1st Marines—headed back to Inchon where we boarded ships and headed for the east coast of North Korea.

After landing in North Korea, we quickly headed north to the Chosin Reservoir. We reached the town of Hagaru-ri, which was about fifteen miles south of the Chosin, where the division set up its CP there. It was reported that there were a few thousand NKPA camped in a valley around Yudam-ni, so three-thousand men from the 5th and 7th Marines headed around the west end of the reservoir. We had three 155 Howitzers accompanying us and it was my job to protect them. I took three squads and set up a perimeter about one-hundred yards out in front of the guns, but not directly in front of them. Sometimes after firing the guns the brass casings of the shells would come off, which could cause injuries to anyone in the area.

It was the day before Thanksgiving and the guns fired all through the day and night. They finally stopped on the morning of Thanksgiving. It was said that we must have killed over three-thousand NKPA soldiers in that valley.

The weather turned bitter cold during the night—dropping well below zero—and they were going to bring us our Thanksgiving Dinner. When it

arrived everything was frozen—the potatoes, gravy, and even the turkey. So, we didn't get much of a Thanksgiving Dinner.

Around 6:00 PM a buddy of mine wanted to borrow my rifle—I had a 0-3. He wanted to take it instead of his M-1 for he was going to ride shotgun with a lieutenant colonel, who was going to division to report on our progress. We were to find out later that they never made it. The Chinese caught them on the road and killed both of them. It should have been me, but he asked me if he could take my place. Not thinking anything like that would happen, I agreed.

Later that night, around 11:00 PM, we saw our first Chinese when we suddenly realized they had us surrounded. We had our machine guns set up in a crossfire pattern, and occasionally a straggler was able to get through. However, the guys behind us with their M-1's took care of them. When morning arrived, I looked out across the area and there must have been thousands of dead Chinese.

The division wanted us to get back to Hagaru-ri but leave everything where it was. Our captain decided he wanted to take the howitzers back with us. So, we attached one to the back of a truck and another one to the back of a bulldozer. We destroyed the third gun.

By this time Bill Ellis, a friend of mine from Evansville, was getting in bad shape—his feet were frostbitten. Bill was an Army veteran of World War II and after the war he joined the Marine Reserve.

After gathering all the dead we could find, we headed south to Hagaru-ri. We headed down the only road from the Chosin and it was nothing more than a dirt road about fifteen feet wide. For every mile we advanced, we had to fight for at least eight hours—it was brutal.

By this time the weather was taking its toll on men, and equipment. Our grenades were no longer working properly, and rifles were jamming due to the lubricating oil freezing. I saw many men urinating on their rifles in the hopes of thawing them out. I even saw men built a fire underneath a .30 caliber machine gun, to get it to work. But most of all, we were running out of ammo.

We continued on. We must have been about three days out of Hagaru-ri, and we were feeling everything was going to be alright now. Wrong! On the side of the road was a shack that was burning, so we all hurried over to

it to get warm. Suddenly, we heard the sound of a bugle and here they came. They were on the high ground, and they were hitting us hard. By this time I only had four bullets for a .38 pistol. In their standard mode of attack, the Chinese ran through us then they returned.

During the first attack our Staff Sergeant had been hit in the right temple. Lucky for him it only penetrated the skin. We could see, and feel, it; it was a slug from a .45, and it was making him dizzy. As the Chinese were making their return attack, Bill and I protected the Sarge as best we could. Suddenly, a concussion grenade landed about ten feet in front of us. It knocked me backwards against a 6 x 6 truck. I heard Bill yelling that he had been hit in the face. I went over to him to check and see how bad he was hurt. Taking off my glove, I wiped off the snow and ice—that had been kicked up by the concussion grenade—from his face to find that he was okay. In just that short period of time, I was unable to put my glove back on. My hand was frozen stiff.

With no ammo, and weapons hardly working, we knew it was about over. Suddenly, in the distance I heard singing—I must have been hallucinating from the extreme cold. But it was getting louder. Low and behold, coming up the road was a unit of the British Royal Marines. What a sight! I was never so glad to see anyone in my life. And let me say this—those boys could fight!

Our lieutenant, who I had been with on Guadalcanal, was riding in a jeep leading our outfit. When we got to him, he was dead—or at least we thought so. I took my poncho and covered his body. The driver was lying on his side, and I could tell he was also dead.

Finally, ten-or-eleven days after our journey started, we arrived at Hagaru-ri—to a thundering cheer from the rest of the division. Unfortunately, along the way we lost roughly two-thousand men.

As I was walking down the road, I heard someone yelling, “Bob Grass. Is Bob Grass here?” I thought who in the world could that be? I turned around and there was my cousin, Jack, from Chicago. I didn’t even know he was in the Marines, let alone Korea. He was in the Marine Air Corps as a spotter for our airplanes. After seeing my hand, which by this time had a large water bubble, he said I needed to get it taken care of. I told him there were men who needed attention worse than I did. So, I waited until they

were all taken of, then we went to the aid station. As we entered the tent, a colonel was raking a Marine over the coals about his feet not being that bad, and for him to get back to his unit. I could only think of what he was going to say to me, so I turned to leave when a captain came in the room. He took one look at my hand and said that it needed to be amputated. I told him I wanted to wait until I got to the hospital in Yokohama, Japan, and see what they said.

The captain told me there was a plane of wounded leaving and for me to hurry and get on it. I was the last person to board the last plane flying out of Hagaru-ri. It was nothing more than a strip that had been leveled by a bulldozer. Another Marine and I were sitting in bucket seats on the side of the plane, and as it took off the Chinese at the end of the runway began to shoot at us. A bullet came through the floor and through the other guy's foot. The plane was so full of bullet holes we couldn't use the oxygen.

It was a short flight to Hamhung, where I went to a M.A.S.H. unit. Who was there when we arrived? General Almond, commander of the Tenth Corps; he was handing out medals to those of us who were going to be transferred to Japan. He looked at my hand and said I needed to get in there and have it amputated. I told him I was going to wait until I got to Yokohama. He told me he couldn't make me, and then he asked what was wrong with me. I told him nothing. He said you are bleeding from your nose. I felt my nose, and sure enough I was bleeding; not only that I was also spitting up blood. He went on to ask me if I had been shot. I told him no. Then he pinned a Purple Heart on me.

When I arrived in Yokohama, I was still bleeding—like a stuck pig. They immediately took me into the emergency room, where a captain—I believe—told me they were going to do exploratory surgery on me to find the source of the bleeding. They cut me from my neck to my waist; my spleen had been split in two. After surgery they left me open, and packed my chest cavity with ice. They kept the incision closed with something to see if it would stay closed during the night. The following morning, seeing that the wound stayed closed they went ahead and sewed me up.

Apparently, I had damaged my spleen when I was slammed against the truck from the concussion grenade. Since it was so cold up north, it apparently kept me from bleeding. It was a miracle I hadn't bled to death.

There was a new Ensign at the hospital that had experience in treating frostbite. He told me I could immediately return to the States, where they would amputate my hand; or, I could stay with him another six months and he could possibly save my hand. Needless to say, I wanted to get home, but I also wanted to save my hand. So, I stayed.

After being here three-or-four days, I began to go around the hospital trying to find out how many from my squad were still left. And who did I find? Our lieutenant who we thought was dead. He had been shot and was unconscious—he was doing fine.

To save my hand, they sprayed it daily with a yellow substance—like iodine—and took long syringes to remove fluid. They also gave me three daily shots of penicillin. After a period of time I became allergic to the type of penicillin they were giving me, so they had to switch to another type—this worked fine.

If my recollection serves me, I was there about two months. Then we were told, because of the large numbers of severely wounded Marines and soldiers, they needed our beds. So, the walking wounded would be transferred, by train, to the naval hospital in Kobe, Japan.

When I arrived in Kobe, my hand still had no flesh on it; it was just skin and bone. I had very little movement in the joints. However, it wasn't long before movement started to come back; my index finger is still stiff to this day. I had been there six months when they told me I was going home. I was taken by a truck down to a harbor where lighter ships—like destroyers—could come in. Here I was told that I would be going home on one of the destroyers. When I boarded, I heard someone say, "Hey, Bob Grass." I turned around and there stood a member of my Sunday School Class back in Evansville—he was a Chief. He told me that I wouldn't be bunking with the other guys; he had a special place for me—a folding bed in his cabin. And boy, did I eat well during our voyage home.

When I arrived in San Francisco, I was given new clothes. I was here for three days when I was given a thirty day furlough. I rode a train to St. Louis, and then finished my journey to Evansville via Greyhound Bus. While I was away, Vernie and our two children stayed with my parents in Troy, Indiana, which was about another forty-five miles. It was late at night and I started to hitchhike to Troy. No one was stopping to pick me up;

however, a gentleman did stop and took me home with him for the night. The following morning his wife fixed me one of the best breakfasts I've ever had. He then took me to the nearest bus stop.

I caught a bus the rest of the way; finally, I was home.

~~*Twenty-Four*~~

Brooks Outland

USS Missouri – BB-63

U.S. Navy

As a teenager, fresh out of Garfield High School—Akron, Ohio—I joined the U.S. Navy on the 21st of May, 1950—my seventeenth birthday.

As my training at the Naval Recruit Training Center (RTC), in Great Lakes, Illinois was nearing its end; military action in Korea was heating up. A message was sent to the Chief of Naval Personnel (BuPers) in Washington D.C., requesting additional crew-members for the battleship *USS Missouri*. BuPers then transmitted an order to the RTC, which directed that the next graduating class be sent to Norfolk, Virginia to be put aboard the *Missouri*.

The RTC combined Recruit Company's 106 and 107 into one company; a total of one-hundred and twenty men. They informed us that all post-graduate orders and personnel leave were canceled. Then we received our new orders—report to duty aboard the *Missouri*.

We traveled by troop train to Norfolk and upon our arrival, we were taken by trucks to NOB (Naval Operating Base). Here we were assigned to a large Quonset hut, for a one night stay and given a Cinderella Liberty; meaning we had the run of the base until midnight. Most of the men of Company 107 got noisily inebriated that evening. Needless to say, the next morning we woke to the smell of vomit.

Having showered, shaved, and our seabags packed, we marched less than a half-a-mile to Pier 7. As I stood there in ranks, this teenage boy was startled at the sight of the battleship moored in front of him. She was a sight to behold, and I still recall that moment quite vividly.

We were informed that the first thirty-five-to-forty men to step aboard would be assigned to Deck Divisions. I was among the second group of twelve who were assigned to the FA Division. Asking what FA Division

did, I was told it involved fire control. Needless to say, I wasn't happy to learn that I would be putting out the ships fires.

However, I was happy to learn that the FA Division didn't put out fires, but was responsible for the ships armament. The Division was comprised of Firecontrolman (FC) and Firecontrol Technician (FT) ratings. There were three main turrets, two turrets forward of the superstructure and one aft, with three 16 inch guns (we called them rifles) to each turret. She was also equipped with ten 5" .38 caliber anti-aircraft mounts, twenty Quad 40mm anti-aircraft mounts, and forty-nine Twin 20mm guns. The U.S. Marine Corps Detachment aboard was responsible for the 20mm guns.

Our "skipper" was Captain Irving T. Duke, and the Executive Officer (XO) was Commander Pierre Charbonnet. The XO was someone to be feared, but also respected. When he walked through the ship, you stepped aside and stood at attention!

General MacArthur had drawn up a plan to land ground troops at Inchon, behind the North Korean Army in the hope of catching them between the forces that were breaking out of the Pusan Perimeter. In order for the Inchon Invasion to be successful, he needed Naval firepower; thus, the hurried need for the *Missouri*.

On Saturday the 19th of August 1950, the *Missouri* cleared Hampton Roads—headed for open sea. Suddenly, the Captain's voice blared-out over the speakers that the *Missouri* was steaming, with haste, to Korea. The crew voiced their approval with a thundering roar.

Due to her urgent need in Korea, the *Missouri* went to sea in threatening weather. En route to the Panama Canal, we encountered a hurricane off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. During this time we were having daily anti-aircraft live-fire drills, and the smell of burned gunpowder filled the air; the odor was almost unbearable. The weather was "unreal" and many of the crew became sick. To escape the stench, I made my way up the superstructure to the 0-11 level. The air there was fresh, but you could feel the swaying back and forth a lot more. I can recall the bow of the ship disappearing under the huge waves, and when the bow emerged, it shook and shuddered from side-to-side.

The wind and waves were so powerful that one of the parapets surrounding one of the 40mm mounts broke loose and washed overboard.

The parapets were made of half-inch steel plate.

Having stopped in San Diego, and Pearl Harbor, for supplies we were again under way for Korea. However, we ran into a typhoon so we did not arrive in time to offer support for the Inchon Invasion. After nineteen days we finally reached our first bombardment mission—Samchok, North Korea. I was not the only one aboard who shook with fear during our first taste of combat.

When “General Quarters” was sounded, all hands were to man their battle stations. My berthing compartment was the first compartment aft of the Anchor Windless Room—up in the bow. However, my GQ station was on the 40mm mount located at the stern (fantail) of the ship, port side. To reach my station I had to run almost the full length of the ship.

During one incident I arrived at my station and noticed I had forgotten to put on my trousers. The Director Operator wrapped the Gun Director cover around me. The cover was made of canvas, and was quite stiff from the cold.

When firing her 16 inch rifles, the concussion would ripple furiously across the water. Since the concussion was so strong, the fantail had to be cleared of all personnel when turret #3 was fired. On one occasion there was a need to fire turret #3 and as the gun crews of the 20mm and 40mm guns raced to the superstructure, three of us didn’t make it. The hatch was open and the man closest to it was thrown down across the opening, breaking several ribs. Being the next closest, I was thrown to the deck—with enormous force—sustaining minor injuries to my spine. However, I was still able to help my shipmate through the open hatch. The sailor who was the farthest away was blown off his feet and into the cable railings mounted at the sides of the ship. Luckily he didn’t end up in the water, but he sustained serious injuries. We were fortunate to get him inside before turret #3 fired again.

During a firing mission to stop enemy mortar fire on our troops, the ship was ordered to use the 5” and 40mm guns to pepper the entire mountainside that was facing us. Pappy Miller, our Gun Director, got permission from the Gun Boss to ricochet 40mm rounds up the side of the mountain off the thick ice that had formed close to shore. We fired until the

ice had been destroyed and no longer usable for ricocheting; Pappy's idea worked.

As I recall, a round weighed about four pounds and the projectile about two pounds. A magazine clip, which was passed from below the mount through an opening in the deck, held four-or-six rounds. The loader had to lift the clip to about his eye level in order to insert it into the weapon.

When the 16 inch rifles fired, you could actually watch the projectile as it flew through the air. As the round left the muzzle we used to say "there goes another Cadillac." Including round and powder bags, it cost about the same as a Cadillac.

I will always remember Christmas Eve of 1950, as we were involved in the evacuation at Hungnam. We were anchored close to shore and surrounded by LSMR (small rocket firing boats). As the crew was celebrating Christmas below deck, we were celebrating the Fourth of July above deck.

When we were in need of food and ammo, we went to Sasebo, Japan. Loading the ship was an "all hands evolution." The working party for unloading the barges that tied along side the ship was made up of several men from each division. Needless to say, unloading was hard work and by the end of the day, we looked like coal miners. If we were in port for only two days, half of the ship would take liberty while the other half had to remain aboard; this was called Port and Starboard Liberty. However, if we were in port for three days, the ship would have 3-section liberty; one section each day.

During one of our replenishing missions, the rifled lining of the 16 inch guns, which had been forced out of the barrel by extensive use, had to be shaved off flush with the end of the barrel.

The *Missouri*, during her tenure in Korea, was involved in nineteen bombardment missions. Of which, two were considered major battles, thereby earning battle stars for her engagements.

I believe that being a crew member aboard the "MO" (nickname for the *Missouri*) made me a better person. Aboard her, I made the first steps from boyhood to manhood.

* * * * *

After being away for fifty-eight years, I have returned to my ship. I have always loved the battleship, and now I am part of the volunteer force working to keep her afloat at Pier Foxtrot 5 on Ford Island, Oahu, Hawaii.

~~Twenty-Five~~

Janice Feagin Britton

801st MEAS (Medical Air Evacuation Squadron)

5th Air Force

U.S. Air Force

I was teaching flight technicians and flight nurses at the School of Aviation Medicine, in Texas, when on September 15, 1950; I received orders to report to the 5th Air Force in Japan. From 1946 to 1948 I had served with the 801st MEAS in the Philippines and Occupied Japan.

My trip home, to Alabama, to visit my folks was quick and short. On the 19th of September, I left Brooklyn Air Base in Mobile, Alabama. It was a non-stop flight—nine hours and fifteen minutes—to Fairfield Susan Air Force Base [renamed to Travis Air Force Base in 1951] in California. Upon my arrival in San Francisco, I was taken to the Bachelor Officers Quarters—this is where the women stayed. There were twenty-one other flight nurses here, one of whom was my friend Kay MacDonald from Prince Edward Island; we had taught together at the School of Aviation Medicine. We all would be joining the 801st.

With stops in Hawaii, Wake and Midway Island's, we landed at Haneda, Japan, on the 5th of October. After processing the following day, we were taken to Tachikawa (Tachi), where we checked in at the 801st Headquarters.

From Tachikawa I flew down to Kyushu, the southernmost island of Japan, where I stayed in the small town of Ashyia. The town was near the Itazuke Air Force Base.

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In September of 1950, Major General William Tunner arrived in Japan. At that time, two out of three casualties were taken to Pusan by truck or rail. From there they were transported to Japan by ship. However, after Tunner's

aircraft delivered supplies to the troops in Korea, they frequently returned to Japan empty; this didn't make any sense to him. So, he stressed the use of aircraft to evacuate the wounded to Japan—the 801st carried out this mission.

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My day started at 4:30 AM, and after breakfast I gathered supplies for the trip. I was picked up at 5:30 AM for a 6:00 AM take-off. We would hitch a ride to Kimpo, which was about twelve miles south of Seoul, with either the 6th or 22nd Troop Carrier Squadrons. Getting to Korea was no problem, since planes were flying to Kimpo twenty-four hours a day.

When we landed, Staff Sergeant Horace Waters—the medical technician—and I would walk to the Air Evac Quonset hut to check with the Medical Administrative Commander about the patients that we would be taking back to Japan.

After arriving in Japan, the patients were offloaded into ambulances and taken to the 118th Army Hospital, which was located about an hour's drive from the airfield.

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Some days when we landed the injured would be waiting at the Quonset hut, and other days we would have to wait hours for their arrival. So, rather than wait one day, I wanted to go where these wounded men were coming from. I was able to hitch a ride in an empty ambulance, and the driver was more than happy to have someone riding with him. On our way to Inchon Harbor, we passed through “no man's land.” This was an area considered extremely dangerous, and only those with a specific purpose were allowed in there. When we arrived at the harbor, patients were being lowered from the hospital ship *Consolation*; as I watched I was amazed how the Navy medics moved these wounded men. Like clockwork, the patients were lowered into small boats, where they were brought ashore to the waiting ambulances. On our trip back three of us rode in the front seat as the ambulance moved slowly over the rough roads.

Before loading the wounded, the Medical Administrative Commander would hand me a manifest that listed name, and condition along with

comments such as ambulatory or litter, arm or leg in cast, taking nasal oxygen, or patient with IV.

After all the cargo had been offloaded, Sgt. Waters and I quickly converted the cabin into a hospital ward. Waters unrolled the litter straps that were attached to the cabin walls and fastened them to the floor. The handles of each litter would be secured in the straps, with three litters in a tier. For the ambulatory patients—those who could walk—canvas seats equipped with safety belts were put in place.

Waters and I would study the manifest and determine where each patient needed to be placed. We then signaled to the administrative officer that we were ready for loading. The waiting ambulances backed up to the ramp, then the ambulance crews carefully carried the litters into the plane; the ambulatory patients boarded last. I checked each patient's dog-tags with the manifest as they came aboard.

Regulations required, during take-off and landing, all medical personnel are seated with their seat belt fastened—unless a medical situation required their attention. Such a case would be to hold an IV apparatus or to administer oxygen to a patient.

When we landed at Itazuke, ambulances were waiting for their precious cargo. After these men were loaded into the box-looking ambulances that displayed a red cross, they were taken on a sixty minute journey to the 118th Army Hospital.

* * * * *

I recall on the 13th of October—a Friday—getting up at 7:00 AM to fix breakfast for the girls that were flying that day. It wasn't very often that several of us were there to eat breakfast together due to our schedules. However, that day we enjoyed eggs, bacon, toast, jelly, tomato juice and coffee.

The day before, Kay and I had flown to Kimpo where many patients were waiting. She returned to Itazuke, on the same plane we flew over in, with thirty litter patients. Staying behind with the remaining wounded were Waters and myself; we waited for the next cargo plane.

Knowing it would be a while before we left, I asked several of the men when was the last time they had eaten; they had not eaten in the last eight

hours. There were twenty men on stretchers and six ambulatory, although hungry, each was happy to be leaving the war—none complained of hunger.

I asked Waters to look after the men while I went to find something for them to eat. Asking for a few volunteers to go with me, I headed to the mess hall. As we entered, I asked to speak to the mess officer; surprised to see a female, a baby-faced sergeant looked up. I explained to him that I was a flight nurse and we had wounded men waiting for a plane to Japan that were hungry. Then I went on to ask if he had any food to give them.

With a proud look on his face, he said he did and we could have all we needed. However, he explained he didn't have enough mess kits. By this time, those eating in the mess hall had heard us talking and everyone wanted to help—a clear indication we were all in this conflict together.

Within fifteen minutes a group of soldiers were serving hot rations to the wounded men. Due to the shortage of mess kits, some improvised by using toothbrush holders and sticks of celery as utensils; others were loaned forks and spoons from soldiers in the mess hall. After everyone had finished, the smiling mess hall workers picked up everything and returned to the mess hall. Ninety minutes later we were in the air.

During our flight, some of the men told me stories of their horrible experiences; others played cards while some slept. After landing, the patients were taken to Osaka General Hospital.

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The air was crisp with a touch of autumn weather as we loaded a group of United Nations soldiers, not all of whom spoke English, onto the C-46. One was an ROK soldier with a cast on his left leg, so we placed his litter in the straps where his leg could extend out into the aisle—for easy access to care. You could tell by his facial expressions that he was in a lot of pain.

After everyone was secured, the plane was cleared for take-off. As I looked around the cabin everyone seemed to be comfortable, except the young Korean soldier. For his pain, I thought about giving him a shot of morphine, when it occurred to me that Kim spoke some English and might be able to translate for me. Kim was a young Korean boy who worked at our base, but I'm not sure why he was on the plane. I asked him to speak to the young man about his pain. As they talked, I noticed the patient rubbed

his stomach. Kim said that he hurt there—he was hungry. I was extremely thankful for this information, because I was about to inject him with Demerol—when all he needed was food.

I immediately plugged in the hot cup and heated up a cup of water; then I dropped in a cube of bouillon and broke up some crackers in it. For an empty stomach, this was ideal food. As he ate his second cup his expression gradually brightened, which gave me a warm feeling.

* * * * *

One night at the base club, I was talking with some of the C-119 pilots as they were reliving some of their cargo drops. I interrupted, asking if one of them would take me on a drop mission, because I wanted to watch men jump from a plane and watch their parachutes open. They looked puzzled at each other, glanced at me, then laughed. Realizing I was serious, one of the pilots with a devilish grin whispered, “Shall I call you in the morning?” Both of us knew what we were planning to do was not “kosher.” I wrote down my name and phone number and handed it to him. He told me that he would call early the next morning—I could hardly wait.

We usually took-off around 6:00 AM, so early to me meant before 6:00 AM. I laid out my clothes so I could get dressed quickly when he called. When I woke the clock read 8:00 AM. I missed the call; I had overslept. My first thought was the C-119 must already be in the air, dropping troops. After drinking a cup of strong, black coffee, I collected enough courage to walk to the Air Evac Quonset hut, located near the flight line.

When I arrived, the news I heard almost knocked me off my feet. Right after their take-off one of the engines went out. The pilot then tried to radio the tower, but his radio was also out; then another engine failed. Finally, the pilot had to make an emergency landing in a field, damaging the plane to the point it was no longer capable of flying. The following day the crew made it back to the base—safe and sound.

* * * * *

As Sgt. Waters and I flew to Kimpo, this time there was a passenger on the plane. He worked in the motor pool at the airfield. After we arrived we learned it would be several hours before the plane would be ready to

transport the wounded. So, I walked over to the motor pool and the guy on the plane was standing next to a jeep—with the hood raised. I explained to him that I would like to see what Seoul looked like now that it had been retaken by the Marines—he honored my request.

It was a pleasant, sunny day as we passed people working in their rice paddies. We slowed as we crossed the Han River on a one-way pontoon bridge. As we crossed I looked down and in the distance saw the bodies of Koreans that had died weeks earlier, lying on the riverbank.

As we drove around the city, I carefully surveyed what was around me. Whole blocks of houses, and stores, that laid in ruins. When the Marines were fighting their way into the city, the North Koreans burned many of the ancient temples, shrines, and buildings that were hundreds of years old.

Gradually the locals were beginning to return, scratching around all the the debris looking to save anything of value.

* * * * *

It was early October and Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, was in the hands of the U.N. Forces. When we landed there in a C-47, at least fifty patients were waiting to be evacuated; however, the C-47 only had a capacity of twenty-seven. Most of these men were brought in by ambulances, but some were flown in by helicopters.

By this time General MacArthur had become so optimistic with the northward advancement of the U.N. troops that he believed the North Korean Army was all but destroyed. So, the radio news carried his announcement to the troops that they would be home for Christmas.

* * * * *

As we took-off at 5:00 AM from Itami, the cabin of the C-46 was full of fifty-five gallon drums of fuel headed for K-28—the airfield at Wonson. After our arrival we unloaded the cargo and we headed south to Kimpo. Here we picked up ammunition and flew it to Pyongyang. Once the ammo was unloaded we took on wounded. Most of which were on stretchers; three were in serious condition.

One had shrapnel near his lung, and was thought to be bleeding internally. Another had a severe head injury with a great loss of blood, and the other had a fractured pelvis.

The ambulance crew lifted each stretcher to two men that were standing on the hood of a truck; they in turn lifted the stretcher into the plane. This is how we loaded the plane when there was no ramp. The patients were grimy with dirt from combat, and had a look of bewilderment.

Air evac planes had first priority for take-off, but on a busy airfield this didn't mean much. However, if a high-ranking official had an urgent mission, he was allowed first departure. Thank goodness our pilot received immediate clearance for take-off, because darkness was approaching and there were no runway lights.

To accommodate the patient with the head injury and the one with shrapnel near his lung, the pilot flew below three-thousand feet. As we ascended the cabin cooled and the patients slept as we flew over the Sea of Japan. Three hours later we landed in Itami, where ambulances were waiting. The wounded men were taken to Osaka General Hospital.

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Darkness was falling as ground flares marked the runway at Wonson when we landed with medical supplies, and drums of fuel. As the plane doors opened, the ground crew yelled up to us that there was a hot birthday dinner waiting for us in the mess hall; it was the Marine Corps birthday—November 10th.

We hopped into a jeep and headed for the mess hall as the ground crew unloaded our cargo. Upon entering I couldn't help but notice the paintings that hung on the walls. They were strange, and I soon learned they were Russian characters. The Soviets had occupied the building not too long before U.N. forces took over the airfield. We were served steak—cooked to our liking—crunchy French fries, peas, and bread and butter. For desert we had warm apple pie with plenty of milk and coffee.

As I ate my steak, and peas, visions of my brother Jack's enjoyment of the Marines annual birthday events danced in my head. Jack was a Marine through and through; having fought in the Second World War, and now

Korea—years later he would serve in Vietnam. He passed away in 1969, at the young age of forty-six.

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On the 27th of November, our cargo to Pyongyang was unusual—socks. As the soldiers marched over frozen ground, in the bitter cold, their feet would perspire causing their socks to become wet and freeze to their feet. So, to help protect their feet, a new policy was instated for the men to change their socks twice a day.

The dirty socks were flown back to Japan, where they were washed and returned to Korea—to be worn again.

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It was now the 28th of November, and while we were waiting on the airstrip in Pyongyang, I wrote my mother.

There were only twenty-one days left before Christmas, and it wasn't looking good for our boys to be home for the Holidays. It was just weeks earlier that MacArthur had rashly made this promise to the troops. One of the patients told me that MacArthur hadn't said which Christmas.

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We were supposed to have landed in Pyongyang; however, the pilot had been told that by the time we arrived the airfield could be in the hands of the Communist forces. So, the pilot received instructions to circle the area several times, looking for signs of fighting, and to use his best judgment about landing.

All crew members wore a patch on their jacket, which stated the code of the Geneva Convention. Written in English and Chinese, it gave in detail the definition and treatment of a Prisoner of War. But, for the most part, it stated each person was to be treated humanely.

The thought that we might be flying over enemy controlled territory was very scary. From the air everything appeared quiet; we saw no troop movement on the narrow roads. So, the pilot decided to land.

It was during the return flight that I met the famed *Life* photographer—David Douglas Duncan. He was in Pyongyang hoping to get a story; the military strategists had predicted the takeover of the capital city of North Korea would be a bloody occasion.

As the plane took-off, David and I were sitting next to each other on the canvas jump seats. When the “No Smoking” sign was turned off David removed his Zippo lighter from his pocket, lighting a cigarette. Staring at the plane’s metal floor, he told me he had missed his story. He said that he had come for the action—people killing each other. And in doing so, he had failed to photograph the bombed out buildings, destroyed homes, the deserted streets, or the displaced people—the true ravages of war.

After landing, and unloading the plane, I never saw Duncan again.

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Several days later, with an empty plane, we flew to Wonson. As we exited the plane, we saw supplies being burned—to prevent the enemy from getting them—all around the airstrip. As we listened to the distant gun and mortar fire, flakes of burned material floated in the air.

Being hungry, we decided it was time to eat the C-rations that were aboard the plane; so, we had ourselves a picnic. We heated the C-rations, which turned out to be pork sausage and gravy. There were some burning coals lying on the ground, and they served as our centerpiece.

As we were enjoying our picnic, wounded soldiers began to arrive. They came by ambulances, trucks, carried by litter bearers, and some were walking; these men were too exhausted to talk. We soon had the plane loaded and off we went.

The heaters began to warm the cabin once we reached cruising altitude, and the men slowly drifted off to sleep. None of us realized that when we left, the Chinese were only a few miles north of the airstrip.

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The 12th of December was the first day I had not flown in three weeks. My days began as early as 4:00 AM and ended as late as 1:00 AM the following morning.

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I had been rotated to Tachikawa for five weeks when Captain Jamie Palm and I flew to Yong Po—near Hungnam. We had some time to kill as we waited our turn for patients; so, we caught a ride in an ambulance to Wonson Harbor—the source of our patients.

Most of the guys we were to evacuate had been treated aboard the *Consolation*; the hospital ship anchored in the harbor. An LCM (landing craft medium) transported recently wounded soldiers to the ship and brought back those that were to be evacuated by plane. Not only were we amazed at how the Navy men handled the wounded, but the variety of ships anchored offshore—an Army transport, an aircraft carrier, a battleship, and many other smaller craft.

A few days later I made the last flight into Yong Po; the airfield was completely evacuated that day as part of the U.N. withdrawal to South Korea.

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The Armed Forces radio continually aired Christmas programs with Fibber McGee and Molly, along with Amos and Andy; plus, a variety of other Christmas music. Several of the girls thought we should leave our tree up until New Year's; so, we waited later to put it up so the needles wouldn't dry out. Loretta and Jamie bought some lights and decorations in Osaka, so we decorated our house and had a tree decorating party on Christmas Eve. Even the Marines who lived next door came over and helped decorate.

During the early morning darkness on Christmas, I ate a bowl of oatmeal while I dressed. I put on a pair of slacks and wool shirt over my pajamas, then my thick, padded flight suit. Next on were the heavy wool socks and my brown, high-topped boots. Then for the finishing touch, I put on my fur-lined hat and gloves. Now I was ready for the flight to the Frozen Chosin.

As our plane flew high over the Korean hills, I looked down and saw the fresh sprinkling of a light snow on the ground. This reminded me of mother as she sprinkled confection sugar on her baked cookies at Christmas.

We soon landed, and quickly brought the wounded aboard. During the flight, several of the men told me of their recent ordeals; I gladly listened as they graphically spelled out the horror of war. Sgt. Waters and I passed out comic books to those well enough to read; I felt like Santa Claus with his bag of toys.

That Christmas Day, in 1950, was like none I have ever experienced.

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Today, when I think of the bitter sub-zero air that swooped in after we landed at Hagaru-ri, I shiver. As we sat there, the plane grew steadily colder as we loaded the wounded. There were so many of them that they were being flown out as fast as the planes could land, load, and take-off.

The short, makeshift runways were too dangerous for the larger C-54's, so the men were being evacuated in C-46's. As soon as Waters had checked to see that all the litters were secure, and I had made myself familiar with the conditions of the men, we were ready for take-off.

As we taxied down the bumpy runway, I announced there was no smoking until we reached level altitude. And that the heaters would warm them up in a few minutes. I then asked if there were any questions. A Marine asked if I knew the score of the Notre Dame – Army football game. Not having kept up with football scores, and not wanting to look like a dummy; I told him I didn't know about that game, but Navy beat Army.

All the Marines laughed, and cheered. Being a former Army nurse, I said "I don't think it's good that Army got whipped." It was instances like these that made me glad that I was a flight nurse. I had the best job in the world.

* * * * *

On our flight from Taegu, Korea, to Itami, Japan, the air was smooth and we had nice weather. Aboard was a mixed load of patients; three Frenchmen, one Turk, one U.S. Marine, along with thirteen other U.N. servicemen—sixteen being litter patients.

The U.S. Marine had a crushed chest and was receiving oxygen, and plasma. I monitored the flow of plasma in his ankle vein to be sure it wasn't

flowing too quickly, and to be sure it wasn't spreading into surrounding tissue.

I had to administer a shot of morphine for an Army PFC, who had an abdominal laceration that was causing him severe pain. One of the Frenchmen was given a dose of sodium amytal, after which he rested comfortably. We partially inflated the Mae West life vests to use as pillows for those lying on the stretchers, so they could be more comfortable.

Finally, we landed at Itami, and as the Frenchman was being taken off the plane, he reached over and touched my ankle—to get my attention. As I looked down at his smiling face, he patted his chest in a way that made me know he appreciated the care he had received.

After all the men had been unloaded, and taken to Osaka General Hospital, the crew returned to Ashyia—our home base.

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After an airdrop, north of Pyongyang, I was on a return flight that was carrying a group of men that had escaped from behind enemy lines. Their heavily bearded faces made them look shaggy and distraught; however, they were happy to be alive. As I listened to their stories, and watched their expressions, I saw the spirit of the American fighting man come alive. This is the story one of the young men told me.

I don't know how many days and nights the ten of us tried to break through enemy lines.

Swallowing to choke back emotion, he paused for a moment; then slowly continued.

After a while, there were only five of us left. Being tired, hungry, cold, and frostbitten, we reached a farmer's shed; frightened and exhausted we crawled in.

The following morning, I woke up and there stood a Korean farmer staring down at us. I thought to myself that

we had had it, but he was friendly to us and brought us food. Being able to speak some broken English, he said he would go get us some help.

We weren't sure where he was going—maybe he was going to get the enemy—but there wasn't anything we could do except wait.

Three days later, in the afternoon, we heard someone shout, "Are any Americans here?" Were we ever glad to see a bunch of GI's walking toward us.

His feet were so badly frostbitten that it looked to me that they would have to be amputated. However, he thought in a different way; he didn't want to return to the States, he wanted to get well enough to return to his unit. He added, "Just think. Those GI's risked their lives to save us five guys."

All I had heard of the North Korean Army was of their barbarism. Just the day before, I heard stories about how they and the Communist Chinese had killed several hundred Allied prisoners in cold blood; then to hear the story of the kindness shown by the North Korean farmer.

The young man could see I was upset and he began to tell me that the Chinese and Russian Communist warlords were forcing their will on the Korean people. I was so surprised, I couldn't speak.

I learned a lot from this young man—whose name I can't remember. However, I would bet my last dollar that if he had his feet amputated he learned to walk, and moved ahead with his life.

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On the 5th of December, I wrote my mother telling her that the 801st had evacuated men with wounds, and frostbite, from the Koto-ri and Hagaru-ri area. The inadequate airstrips were entirely surrounded by enemy troops, and were subjected to hostile fire. Over a period of a few weeks, one-hundred thirty-one flights had airlifted men to medical care, and safety.

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The Marine squadron we had been flying with was suddenly called back to Hawaii. So, being without planes to evacuate the wounded, there was no reason for the 801st to remain at Itami. At 3:00 PM on a Tuesday, we learned of our moving. Having spent most of the night packing, we left Itami at 7:30 AM on Wednesday morning headed for Ashyia.

Soon, I was flying again from Ashyia to Pusan.

* * * * *

It was now February, 1951 and even though our evac work continued, it had somewhat changed in character. We were moving Chinese Prisoners of War to prison camps in the south—it was the humane thing to do. Their wounds were infected, and often full of white, squirming maggots. The wounds that had been bandaged smelled foul and needed changing. Many of the men were starving. And since they could no longer fight, the Chinese had sadistically left them behind—to die.

We were also evacuating our own men who had been prisoners, and escaped. These men had managed to survive by eating twigs, and drinking muddy water. And without the use of maps, were able to find their way to friendly troops.

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It was March 15, 1951 and we were oblivious to the fact that Seoul had been recaptured for the fourth time, by UN forces.

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I was flown to Tachikawa to teach medical technicians, which was a change of pace from my daily routine. Lt. Colonel Allen, my CO, had asked me to teach a mini-course to the men who had recently been assigned to the 801st. These were medics who had not been trained in air evacuation techniques.

After their training, they were assigned to units where they were needed.

* * * * *

It was Easter time and the world-renowned evangelist E. Stanley Jones spoke at the base chapel. He was in Japan on a six-week tour, preaching to Americans and speaking to the non-English speaking Japanese who worked at the base. For Easter I made hot cross buns and we ate them with ham and eggs—what an enjoyable breakfast.

A week later, Lt. Colonel Verena Zeller—Chief Nurse of the U.S. Air Force—was in Japan. She was part of a team that was inspecting the facilities in the Far East Air Force; I had a part in introducing them to the members of the 801st MAES. The team was headed by General Armstrong, the U.S. Surgeon General, and consisted of General Swartzenberg, Chief Surgeon of the Air Force, Colonel Ben Strickland, head of the School of Aviation Medicine at Gunter AFB, along with six physicians.

When Lt. Colonel Zeller asked me if I would like to return to SAM—to teach—I could hardly believe my ears. Having been here less than a year, and not the usual two-year period, I knew special arrangements would have to be made before I could return to the States. Colonel Strickland carefully pointed out the necessary negotiations within the chain of command that were required for me to be reassigned.

Even though I respected the “bird colonel” insignia he wore, I thought of Ben as a friend. When I lived at Randolph, I knew his wife and two daughters. Just the thought of returning to school gave me something to dream about.

I was accompanied on a special evacuation flight—from Teagu to Tachikawa—by General Armstrong, Dr. Henderson, and Colonel’s Strickland and Zeller. On this Sunday we had a mixed group of patients including soldiers from France, Greece, Turkey, and several American paratroopers that had been injured in an airdrop.

The patients were eager to talk about their experiences, and give their views to the group. However, my time was consumed with those patients who needed tending too.

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On the 11th of April 1951, I was teaching at Tachikawa when President Truman released General Douglas MacArthur from his command. After their defeat of the Second World War, MacArthur treated the Japanese

fairly. This is why, on that misty, gloomy day, people lined the narrow streets as he drove to Haneda to leave their country forever. I was among them, joining in their sadness.

* * * * *

It was June and we were busy flying. In one day I flew four short trips—an eighteen-hour day. We were picking up patients that had been treated at a M.A.S.H. unit. On our last flight we had nineteen litter and six ambulatory patients. These men had broken arms, legs, and fingers; conditions that would take time to heal. One patient had a fractured pelvis, and was in tremendous pain.

On the tenth, the news reported about the increased use of air power against the enemy suggested the war would get worse before it got better. The day before, with a load of K-rations, we landed in a forward area near the fighting. After the cargo was unloaded, we took aboard seven soldiers that had been injured in a truck accident.

The following day our load consisted of thirty ambulatory Marines. We were able to serve lunch during the flight, which was provided by the mess hall. During the past ten months, air evac services had definitely improved.

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Finally, I received orders reassigning me to Gunter Field, in Montgomery, Alabama. During the next two weeks I packed my belongings, said good-bye to my friends, and was on a plane heading to Alabama. I wasn't alone; the plane was loaded with wounded men who told of their experiences. As I listened, I again came face-to-face with the horrors of war.

We had a stop at Hickam Field in Honolulu, so I wired my aunt and uncle who were there on vacation. They were there to meet my plane, and as I ran to meet them, I felt the firm hand—of a customs inspector—on my shoulder. Before I was allowed to talk with anyone, I had to go through customs.

After a five day stay, as their guest, at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, I boarded a plane bound for the School of Aviation Medicine in Montgomery.

I reported for duty in June of 1951, and within the year I met an Air Force officer—my future husband. In September of 1952, we were married. We wanted to begin a family, and at that time a nurse could not have a dependent under the age of eighteen. I reluctantly resigned my commission.

I was always happy that I had followed my father's advice, and joined the Army Nurse Corps. My eight years of service, in the Army and Air Force, enriched my life.[\[4\]](#)

~~*Twenty-Six*~~

Charles Toole

77th FA BN

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On my eighteenth birthday—August 9, 1943—I was certain my draft notice would be forthcoming; I was right. On the 28th of September, I was inducted into the U.S. Army. After I returned home at the end of the Second World War, I decided to become a career soldier and obtained a commission in the artillery. In the late 1940's, there were two branches of artillery—field and anti-aircraft. Field artillery was where you fired at ground targets, while anti-aircraft fired at planes.

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In September of 1950, I was shipped to Korea with an anti-aircraft artillery battalion. However, the North Koreans had no air force to speak of, so my unit was used in a field artillery role.

We went way up into North Korea, getting within forty miles of the Yalu River. However, in late November the Chinese Army entered the war—in support of the North Koreans. Had it not been for this change of events, the war probably would have been over by the end of the year.

Having been greatly outnumbered, we got kicked out of North Korea and had to retreat back into South Korea; this was a somber time for us. We pulled our guns with tractors, which burned a lot of diesel fuel. We had run out of fuel, so we used trucks to pull our guns to keep the Chinese from capturing them; we destroyed the tractors. It was bitterly cold, and the infantry had it rough; they had to move by foot. Being in an artillery unit, we had the luxury of riding in trucks or jeeps.

I remember crossing a shallow river and watching as the infantry dodged chunks of ice as they waded across. Having been an infantryman in

the Second World War, I knew the misery these men were going through.

We were all scattered out as we moved back south. When we reached Seoul, we waited for all the units of our battalion to form up again. Once we did, we headed to Pusan—in an organized manner. To keep from clogging up the roads, which were not very good to start with, some of us with equipment and guns moved by rail; others moved by trucks.

We rode in box cars that were crowded with Korean refugees. Our guns and equipment were riding on flat cars—with guards. There was a Korean woman holding a dead infant. It was a slow train, and for a couple of days I remember seeing her still holding her dead child. I could only think of the love this mother must have had for her child.

Finally, a few days before Christmas of 1950, we arrived in Pusan. Our chaplain had made arrangements for some of us to hear a Korean orphan's choir sing Christmas carols. It was held in an extremely cold building, and when they sang "Silent Night," there were very few dry eyes in the crowd of GI's. We were all thinking of home, our families, and of course—a warm house.

While in Pusan, we again were established as an anti-aircraft artillery battalion. In May of 1951, I requested a transfer to a field artillery battalion and was assigned to Battery C of the 77th FA BN of the 1st Cavalry Division, which provided support to the 7th Cavalry Regiment—where I was a forward observer. A forward observer was usually attached to a front line infantry company, where he could direct fire missions with the use of a radio.

By the time I joined the 1st Cavalry Division, the North Korean army had been badly beaten, so now our enemy was the Chinese army. When things had quieted down and we were placed in a defensive position, I would get my FDC (fire direct center) to let me harass the Chinese that were in front of us. We were separated from the Chinese by a thousand or so yards, and as I spotted puffs of smoke I would mark them on my map. This gave me a more accurate reading of where their front line was.

I was given a 105 howitzer, and depending on how much ammo we had, I directed fire on their positions. We called this "harassing" fire, which didn't do much damage; it just kept the Chinese on their toes. It also let them know we knew where they were.

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One time I was spotting and I noticed a lot of Chinese soldiers getting into position—just before dark—on Hill 339; which was approximately a mile from my position. I was able to get a TOT (Time on Target) fire mission that killed quite a few Chinese. A TOT is where one fire direct center coordinates with other artillery battalions to time their firing, so all rounds hit within a few seconds after the first round hits; this doesn't give the enemy time to react.

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About a thousand yards in front of us, three Russian T-34 tanks had dug in during the night. Late in the day, we called in scattered fire and all three tanks took off. The following morning I was able to get an 8-inch howitzer, whose shell could do more damage than that of the 105 howitzer; we tore up all three bunkers. Two were empty; the third one had a tank in it. The tank was set on fire and burned for several hours, as the ammo inside exploded.

* * * * *

Prior to going home in November 1951, I spent the last few weeks in Korea with a Greek infantry battalion. I joined a company, as a replacement, whose forward observer had been killed in action. One thing about the Greeks, they were terrific fighters.

When I left their hill, I had the honor of having lunch with their battalion commander—a lieutenant colonel. He told me that every man in his battalion was a volunteer who hated communism with a passion. It seemed each man had a family member killed, or wounded, during the civil war that occurred in their country after the Second World War. The Soviet Union had tried to turn Greece into a communist country. He went on to say that guards had to be placed around the dock to keep other soldiers from sneaking aboard their ship as it left for Korea. I recall one incident as were attacking the hill. A Greek lieutenant kicked the hell out of a soldier who was manning a machine gun, because he hadn't moved his gun fast enough to kill more Chinese—as they retreated.

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After serving in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, I retired from the U.S. Army.

~~*Twenty-Seven*~~

Douglas Voss

USS Pledge – AM-277

U.S. Navy

In 1944, at the age of seventeen, I joined the U.S. Navy for a two year tour; then in 1948 I re-enlisted. I was assigned for duty aboard the *USS Pledge*—a minesweeper. The function of a minesweeper was to cut the cables on underwater mines, and when they came to the surface we destroyed them with our guns.

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After the liberation of Seoul, in the later part of September, the UN forces headed north. On the 9th of October, the invasion of North Korea began, with I Corps going up the western side of the peninsula and the Tenth Corps taking the eastern side. However, amphibious landings would be required of the Tenth Corps. The Marines 1st Division would be landing at Wonson and the U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division would land at Iwon.

In preparation of the landings at Wonson, the Navy sent in minesweepers to handle the difficult and hazardous task of clearing an area two-thousand yards wide and fourteen miles in length. One of the minesweepers involved was us—the *USS Pledge*.

On October 12th, after aiding in the clearing of two minefields, the *Pledge* entered a third. Suddenly the lead ship, the *USS Pirate*, hit a mine and within minutes she was gone. We quickly lowered a boat and cut loose our sweep gear to help retrieve survivors. Immediately we were fired on from shore batteries from Sin-do Island. Equipped with 3-inch guns and two Twin 20 mm guns, we returned fire—silencing at least three of the batteries.

I was on the second deck on one of the 20mm guns, when we tried to turn out of the minefield; as she turned she struck a mine on the starboard side of the bridge superstructure. The blast buckled the deck. I was injured.

Everything was done to save the ship, but within sixty minutes she had met the same fate as the *Pirate*—she sank.

I don't recall how long I was in the water, but it must have been around four or five hours. While in the water I clung to a net with floats, as the shore batteries opened fire on us; thereby, making rescue attempts very difficult. We were finally picked up by crews from the *USS Endicott*. The *USS Doyle* was also in the area, but I can't recall the names of the other ships or how many.

That afternoon the *Pledge* lost seven men—one dead and six missing—and another forty wounded. We were taken to the hospital ship, the *USS Repose*, where I would be a patient for two weeks. Then I was transferred to a U.S. Naval hospital in Yokosuka, Japan.

All survivors of the *Pledge* were granted a thirty-seven day furlough; then on the 23rd of December we were to report for duty and reassignment. I was able to spend Thanksgiving Day—in Marshall, Minnesota—with my family.

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After returning to the west coast I was assigned to the *USS Estes*, an Amphibious Force Flagship that was brought out of mothballs and re-commissioned on January 31, 1951—then back to Korea.

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At a later date I was attached to the Atom Testing and was aboard the *Estes* for the first hydrogen bomb tests. I had a brother on the *Estes* at the same time. However, in 1958 I transferred to the Air Force where I ended my military career in 1969.

~~*Twenty-Eight*~~

Mario “Tony” Faiella

5th Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

I turned seventeen on August 5, 1949, while living in Bridgeport, Connecticut. A month later, on the 27th of September, I was sworn into the U.S. Marine Corps.

After completing basic training at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, I boarded a troop ship that I believe was the *USS Boxer*—and journeyed to Japan. Upon arriving in Japan we went through processing, where I was assigned as a cook in the H & S Company, 1st BN, 5th Marines.

From here we flew to Korea, which was in mid-October of 1950. I was among a group of thirty-five assorted cooks and bakers. As our plane, a C-47 transport, landed at Kimpo airfield we quickly moved off the plane. We were equipped with M-1's, but we had no ammo. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a shot rang out and they told us to get behind a pile of sand; we didn't have to be told twice.

As a cook, I volunteered to go on several patrols. These are some of my experiences.

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One day as we were moving along a road we moved into a field, and standing there were what looked like soldiers, so several of the guys took some shots at them. However, these figures never moved, or returned fire. After further investigation they turned out to be bundles of straw. All of the sudden, I heard moans coming from underneath a house that had collapsed. Frightened that it may be an enemy soldier, I cautiously pulled out an elderly man—he looked to be one-hundred years old. Since I had helped him, he must have bowed to me at least two dozen times.

A friend named Parker, another guy, and I volunteered to climb up a hill and retrieve an abandoned .50 caliber machine gun. We were told to be careful, because that area could be zeroed in by a sniper. Finally, we made it to the site and retrieved the gun, tripod, and a box of ammo, along with a box of grenades. A sniper did take some shots at us, but he missed us by at least thirty feet, or more. We yelled obscenities at him, and told him he must be blind. We then slipped off the hill with all our goodies.

* * * * *

One morning around 3:00 AM, with a light snow falling, I noticed someone walking stooped over about thirty-five feet from our two-man foxhole. I told my foxhole buddy, who was a staff sergeant, what I saw. He told me not to shoot the civilian—then he laughed. I shot anyway only to learn the next morning he was a Chinese soldier. He was stooped over because he was dragging a burlap bag full of sulfur. I learned that the Chinese stuffed the sulfur into the tracks of our tanks.

* * * * *

I was with four or five other cooks gathered together on a road along the waters edge of the Chosin Reservoir. Suddenly, a jeep came by and stopped, and I believe it was Lt. Col. Murray that climbed out of it. There were approximately two-hundred Chinese soldiers who were wounded and their hands and feet were frozen; they could only hobble along. The colonel pointed across the frozen reservoir and told them their units were in that direction.

He went on to tell them we had no food or medicine to give them. So, the Chinese soldiers began to hobble across the frozen water. After watching for several minutes, some of the men dropped to the prone position and started to shoot at them. None of them were hit, but several slipped and fell on the ice.

As I walked down the road, it was full of trucks, jeeps, tanks, and personnel carriers. It had been extremely cold and my feet were in bad shape. A corpsman had been watching me and asked me why I was hobbling. I told him that my feet hurt and that I also had dysentery. He put a tag on my parka and told me to report to the aid station.

The tag was to let others know you were hurt. It was hard to catch a ride on any of the trucks, because I was always running to the edge of the road with a five gallon coffee can—my portable potty. Finally, I was able to catch a ride in a jeep; when nightfall came, the driver fell asleep waking up in time to yank the steering wheel to the left—saving us from going off the edge.

We came to a river where the bridge had been blown-up. Lt. Denning helped reconstruct a bridge made from parts that had been airdropped. This bridge was vital in saving our tanks and vehicles, along with getting out our dead and wounded Marines. The bridge was located near a power plant.

* * * * *

It was getting close for me to rotate home, when my new boss kicked me telling me to get up and go to work. While I was still in my sleeping bag, I explained to him that my relief was doing the job, and that I was packed and ready to leave for the stateside in two days. However, he was surprised when I got out of my sleeping bag and punched him in the nose. Needless to say, I was put on report and did not get my promotion to sergeant for another six months.

* * * * *

I was in Korea until I shipped home on November 30, 1951. After arriving stateside, I went home for Christmas, and then I was transferred to Barstow, California on the 8th of January, 1952.

I retired from the Marine Corps in 1970.

~~Twenty-Nine~~

Raymond Cesaretti

7th Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

After graduating from high school, and being unable to convince my girlfriend that I was a worthwhile and upstanding citizen, I decided to join the service of my country. During the “big war,” most of my friends had served in the Navy, so I drove to Eureka, California, and joined the Navy—the year was 1948.

For whatever reason, the recruiter said I would be called and sworn in later. So, I left and went to Scotia to visit my friend Garth. His mother informed me that he had left a week earlier to join the Marines. She went on to explain that the Marines had a new program where you could serve active duty for one year, then spend ten years in the Reserves.

Still in Scotia, I decided to visit Dale—another friend. His mother told me that he had joined the Marines two weeks earlier. So I went home, packed my bag, and caught the next bus for San Francisco, because there was no recruiting office for the Marines in Eureka.

I was already in boot camp when I received a letter from the Navy with the command, “Report for Induction.” After much thought, and regardless of consequences, I decided to talk to the DI. I knocked on his door, and he grumbled, “Yeah?”

I said, “Sir, Private Cesaretti requesting permission to speak to Drill Instructor, Sir!”

He replied, “Get back to where you belong or you will be scrubbing the Parade Ground with a toothbrush.”

I said, “Sir, yes sir.” Then I left.

Still in a dilemma, I tried again. This time I told him I had a letter I thought he needed to read.

He responded, “This better be good, or you are going to need a parcel of toothbrushes.” After reading the letter, and laughing, all he could say was “Get the hell outa here.”

The next day he had a ball showing the letter to all the other DI’s who had a good laugh, because the Marines had pulled one over on the Navy. I was relieved that I didn’t have to get on my knees and scrub the Parade Ground.

On one occasion we were marched into a canyon and told to sit on bleachers that had been provided. After everyone became quiet, our sergeant told us to carefully look around and tell him what we saw. We saw nothing that seemed out of the ordinary. He told us we were looking to far out, try again. We still couldn’t see anything. Then the sergeant yelled, “Now!” From the ground, not more than ten feet from our front, sprang three Marines with rifles. Another three jumped up behind us. We had just been introduced to camouflage warfare.

We also did a lot of running—especially up hills. There was a very steep hill near Tent Camp Two, and after supper we had to duck walk up that hill. Later, we would be weighted down with a water cooled machine gun, and duck walk up and down that hill until sunset—then even after dark. We would be ready for the task of running up those man killing hills in North Korea.

Due to the need of us getting to Korea in a hurry, our training did not stop at night. We got very little sleep and this was good training for us, because sleep deprivation is a big part of warfare. I remember one time I had to keep my eyes open with my fingers, because when I let go of my eyelids they dropped closed.

* * * * *

We were at the Chosin Reservoir, near the village of Yudam-ni, when Sergeant Frank Warrior came to my foxhole to tell me the CO wanted to see me about a mission—which was strictly voluntary. Arriving at the CO’s tent, a (Nationalist) Chinese Marine, Lt. Lee—one of our interpreters—was waiting for me. The CO told me that Lt. Lee wanted to go into North

Korean villages, at night, where he knew Chinese soldiers were hiding in houses to keep from freezing to death. Lt. Lee thought he could go by himself—unarmed—and talk them into surrendering. Saying that was a good way to get killed, the CO told him he could not go unless he had a sidearm and took a BAR man with him. “So now it’s up to you,” said the CO. Thinking this Chinese Marine was either nuts, or the bravest man in Korea, I decided to ride shotgun.

Lee was to knock on the door and begin talking. However, if he was to drop to the snow or I heard a shot, I was to sweep the entire hut with my automatic rifle. I loaded all the ammo I could carry, and off we went. The first hut we came to, Lee hit the snow and I poured more than forty rounds into the hut—no one came out. We found the enemy was packed in so tight that the dead couldn’t fall. Scared that others would come bailing out firing their burp-guns and throwing grenades, we headed back thinking we had bitten off enough for one night.

We went into other villages using the same tactic and did not get many to surrender. I guess the Chinese finally learned they had a choice of surrendering or dying, because after the first few nights we started taking prisoners.

I sometimes wonder how many Chinese I killed during the Chosin Reservoir campaign. I have flashbacks of those nights, and of blood running from under the front doors.

While at the Chosin, we dug in every afternoon and studied the area to our front, so we wouldn’t shoot at bushes during the night. We were setting up for a fight one night, so I put a few magazines of ammo on the parapet of our foxhole. I told my buddy, Don Auellar, to take care of the grenades. As usual, the next morning I went out to see if all the dead to our front were really dead. I found one of our grenades, and it still had the pin in it. Taking the grenade back to Don, I said, “These work a lot better, Don, if you pull the pin.” He never lived it down, but in the heat of battle it’s easy to do something foolish like that.

Before the breakout of the Chosin Reservoir, Don found two pairs of nearly clean wool socks. Being the best buddy a Marine could have, he gave one pair to me. Not having our snow pacs off our feet for over a month, we hobbled down to the river to wash our feet and put on our new

socks. To our amazement, our socks had become part of our feet. Needless to say, we were shocked seeing them black, and blistered. Don asked, "What happened? These aren't my feet." That too, was my thought. Walking back to our foxhole, an officer noticed us and drove us to the surgeons' tent. After looking at our feet, he ordered Don to ride with the convoy out of the Frozen Chosin. However, since I was a BAR man, I would have to stay; all the firepower we had was needed to get us out. Don was certain I would not survive the combat we would have to endure to get back to Hagar-ri. And I was certain all the wounded in the convoy would be killed by the Chinese.

The road was frozen with patches of knee deep snow, and counting the wind chill, the temperature reached seventy-five degrees below zero. My spit would freeze before it hit the ground. The chill from the barrel of my BAR stabbed through three layers of gloves, through my palm, and shot out the back of my hand like a nail being driven through it.

As the trucks navigated the winding, downward hills, the infantrymen were having a hard time staying upright on the slippery surface. The journey south was a slow progress due to the enemy being so close to, and sometimes on, the road and shooting out the trucks radiators and gas tanks. They would also throw white phosphorus grenades onto the trucks carrying the wounded.

Don and I were finally separated; he in the convoy of wounded, and I back in action. I was part of Charlie Company, 7th Marines, led by Lt. Col. Ray Davis, who went to relieve the beleaguered Fox Company—who was holding Toktong Pass at all costs. It was necessary to hold the Pass, because if the Chinese captured it, the 1st Marine Division would have been annihilated.

Suffering from hypothermia, no water or food, and totally exhausted, we were eventually successful in reaching Fox Company. In doing so, we earned the name "Toktong Ridgerunners."

I was flown out of Hagar-ri on the last plane out. We were flown to the Air Force Hospital in Fukuoka, Japan. Even though the hospital was not crowded, the following morning I was put on a train headed for the Naval Hospital in Yokuska, Japan. This hospital was so crowded there wasn't even enough room for my stretcher on the floor in the halls. I was put in a

warehouse, then a chapel where the litters were laid across the tops of the pews. Finally, I was given the second bed in a large ward.

Lying there, I started to cry for my lost buddy. From the bed next to me, came a gruff voice, “Stop it! I lost my buddy and I can’t stand your sniveling.” It was Don! Suddenly my sadness for a lost friend became a jubilant celebration.

With all the hospital ships at sea, and all the hospitals in Japan, what was the chance of us being in the same ward—and next to each other? Don and I both knew it was Divine Guidance; from God; nothing is impossible.

* * * * *

I am often asked, “What was the hardest part about fighting at the Chosin Reservoir?” That is a hard question to answer, because almost everything about it was difficult. We were told not to eat the snow, because it would drop our body’s core temperature—inviting hypothermia. Our C-rations would freeze solid. Even though it didn’t help our bodies core temperature, we carried a can next to our body so it would thaw out. However, if you didn’t eat it right away, it would freeze again. And if you ate, you got diarrhea. With all the layers of clothing we wore, it was nearly impossible to get out of them; we were the filthiest people on earth. Then there was the difficulty of staying awake, when every fiber of you body cried for sleep.

I lost sixty pounds in Korea. However, I don’t recommend combat as a way of losing weight.[\[5\]](#)

~~*Thirty*~~

Floyd E. “Gene” Combs

USS Begor – APD-127

U.S. Navy

Living on a farm in Mineral Wells, West Virginia, I had grown tired of getting out of bed every morning at 4:30 AM. So, upon turning seventeen I decided it was time to leave the farm—I joined the Navy in March of 1945.

During 1945 – 1946, I was assigned to CBMU-618 (Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit) at Yonobaru Naval Air Station on Okinawa. I arrived in 1945 just after the island had been declared secure. I was assigned stringing telephone lines and phones at the air station, along with being a teletype operator.

* * * * *

In June of 1950, while sailing along the California coast, the *USS Begor* collided with a fishing boat, puncturing its hull. She underwent repairs at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, in San Francisco. I boarded the ship while she was in the shipyard.

After the hostilities had broken out on June 25th, the *Begor* was ordered to Korea. So, while she was still in the yard, modifications were made to the ships communication as well as adding another twin-mount 40mm gun—just forward of the bridge. We finally departed for Korea on the 13th of November.

The APD’s purpose was to carry combat troops, such as Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT), and land them on enemy beaches. During our 1950 – 51 deployment to Korea, we also carried a team of 41st British Commando Unit—who we launched on nighttime raids on North Korean rail facilities.

When the Chinese entered the war on the 28th of November, Tenth Corps was located in the area around the Chosin Reservoir. They were given orders to pull back to the Hungnam – Wonson area, and to set up a

beachhead. However, the plans were changed and they were to evacuate through the port facilities at Hungnam. The Navy moved in everything they could, plus ordering commercial cargo ships to assist in the evacuation.

During December 16 through 24, we had a ten man detachment—two officers and eight enlisted men—of UDT-Three aboard the *Begor*. Their mission was to set explosives on the complete shoreline at the port of Hungnam. To augment this unit, it was relatively normal to ask for volunteers from members of the ships crew to work with them.

As a Storekeeper First Class, my duties consisted of ordering, accounting for and issuing supplies and equipment for the ship. Being a twenty-two year old sailor, I thought it would be cool to work with these guys; so, on the 24th of December I volunteered my services.

We arrived on the beach early in the morning—just before daylight. I remember the weather being bitterly cold, and UN troops had several fires going to help keep warm. A Turkish Army unit was guarding the port facility and they offered us cups of very strong coffee. Naval aircraft were dropping bombs in the hills just outside the city, while battleships lobbed two-thousand pound bombs—to the beach—just over our heads. Small arms fire, from the approaching Chinese Army, could be heard in the hills surrounding Hungnam.

A two-star Army General approached one of our crew, who was busy tying fuse lines. The general had a lit cigar in his mouth; a sailor jumped to his feet, pulled the cigar out of the general's mouth, threw it on the ground, and stomped on it. He then looked him straight in the eyes and told him how stupid he was for smoking while this explosive operation was going on. The general actually apologized, then turned and walked away.

Our group finished planting the explosives around 11:00 AM, and we were back on the ship before noon; it was a “go” for the demolition. Around 2:15 PM orders came down to detonate the explosives; this resulted in the complete destruction of the docks.

At that time, excluding the atomic bomb, the destruction of the port facilities at Hungnam was the largest man-made explosion in history.

Between December 10 through 24 over two-hundred thousand soldiers and Korean refugees, plus tons of military cargo, were evacuated through Hungnam.

I have often wondered what happened to the Korean civilians, who arrived at the dock too late to be included in the evacuation. Were they killed in the explosion, or did they become casualties of the Chinese Army that was arriving at the port facility?

~~Thirty-One~~

Donald Thomas

23rd Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

In the summer of 1947, I was living at 274 Elm Street in Atwater, California. Imbued with the patriotism left over from the Second World War, I had a strong feeling about wanting to serve in the U.S. Army. I told the recruiter that I was seventeen and after passing the entrance exam, my parents signed all the appropriate papers. I was in, even though I was actually fifteen years old.

After completing basic training at Fort Ord, California, I applied for training as an ordnance small arms weapons repairman. So, for twelve weeks I attended the Army's Ordnance School at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. At the end of training I was given a thirty day leave before being shipped to Germany. While I was waiting for a troopship at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, I turned sixteen.

In early summer of 1950, I returned to the Aberdeen Proving Grounds where I was discharged—five days before the start of the Korean War. I returned to California and for six weeks held a couple of uninteresting jobs around Merced, so I re-enlisted. I returned to Fort Ord to wait for assignment; it seemed nearly everyone that was waiting for assignment was being sent to Korea—I would be no exception.

On the 22nd of November, 1950 I arrived at the 2nd Infantry Division Headquarters at Pyongyang, North Korea. When I arrived everyone was saying the war was over. General MacArthur himself was saying that we would be home by Christmas, which sounded great to me. Having spent my first enlistment in Ordnance, repairing firearms, I didn't figure I would get into the war anyway. However, on the 23th of November my bubble burst. Along with eleven other guys, I was headed to the 23rd Infantry Regiment; apparently they needed "shooters," not "fixers."

Three of us had been assigned to K Company, 3rd BN. Riding in an open jeep all day, with the temperature below freezing; we arrived at company headquarters after dark. Here we learned that out of two-hundred men, only ninety-five were left and a couple weeks earlier an entire platoon had been lost. While waiting for replacements, the company was assigned guard duty at Company Headquarters—we three were all they got!

After spending the night in a Korean adobe house, which was being used as Captain Haynes' Company Headquarters, we were each assigned to different platoons. Around noon everyone was alerted to move up to the front lines and rejoin the regiment.

On the 25th of November, under the cover of darkness, Chinese forces attacked all along the line of the Eighth Army. We loaded onto open trucks on the morning of the twenty-sixth for our journey north to rejoin the regiment. With the temperature below zero and adding in the wind chill from the moving trucks, it must have been fifty degrees below zero. Twenty-four of us sat in the back, on wooden jump seats, jammed together and did our best to wiggle our feet and fingers. We also rubbed our upper legs to keep them from going numb.

As we arrived in the small town of Samin that afternoon, another convoy was on the road headed in our direction. By the markings on their front bumpers they were from the 9th Infantry Regiment, which also belonged to the 2nd Division.

The lead truck had a canvas top over the cargo area and there was a soldier at the front of the bed poking his head out from under the canvas. When he was asked how the 9th was doing, he said nothing. However, he clinched his fist and with only his thumb sticking up, he motioned in the direction of the rear of the truck. This made no sense until his convoy started moving, and we could see in the truck.

The truck bed was piled to the top of the bows with uncovered bodies—each lying on a litter. The next six trucks, in the convoy, were identical. I had never witnessed anything like that in my entire life; I began to feel sick. A knot rose up in my throat; tears rolled up in my eyes; and I found it hard to breathe. Up to this point, we had been talking and joking—not now. Silence came over us for a long time.

We found out later that these casualties were from a battle at a place called “Chinaman’s Hat.”

* * * * *

On the 29th of November, Colonel Paul Freeman ordered the 23rd north to hold a vital road junction west of the village of Kunu-ri. After marching all day we arrived at the junction. The road ran west to Sinanju and southward to Sunch’on.

As we headed north, we passed vehicles with the markings of the 24th Regiment of the 25th Infantry Division, and a thought came to my mind, “Why in the world were we headed towards the front lines when everyone else was going away from it?” I thought this was a good question. The answer; the 23rd was to hold the road junction so all the other Eighth Army units could pull out.

The 3rd BN immediately set up defensive positions—a mile east of the junction—on a low ridge that looked across five-hundred yards of frozen rice paddies, a small river, and the village of Kunu-ri.

On our left flank was Love Company. The other two battalions set up positions along the west and south sides of the road; thereby forming a three-sided defense line. From the center of the arc, Col. Freeman directed the fight. The regiments mission: to prevent the Chinese from catching up with the 2nd Division as they withdrew south to Sunch’on, and to keep the road to Sinanju open for our escape route.

By this time the temperature was dipping around twenty degrees below zero. In our five-man squad, I was the odd man out and had to dig a foxhole by myself. Chipping away at the frozen ground trying to dig the standard knee-deep, six feet long, and three feet wide hole was slow going. We had our trenching tools with the shovel-blade locked at a right angle; even in the extreme cold, I sweated.

While we were digging, there were two or three-hundred Chinese soldiers standing around huge bonfires—directly in front of us—on the railroad tracks next to the village. They didn’t know we were digging in, but we could hear them hollering, blowing their bugles, and beating their pans. However, around midnight they returned to the village and we kept on digging until just before daylight. At dawn we stopped all activity and every

eye, and ear, was pointed in the direction of the village. Just before full light they appeared—Chinese soldiers walking single file, about fifteen feet apart—in an unending line.

As they crossed the bridge to our side of the river they turned in our direction, passing five-hundred yards in front of us. They were on their way to cut off the Sinanju Road. Sergeant “George” Chamberlain, our first platoon sergeant, quietly passed the word down the line for us to hold our fire until Love Company’s machine guns opened fire. When they did, all hell broke loose. Every weapon, up and down the line, opened up. It was like a shooting gallery at a local carnival; many Chinese soldiers hit the ground—never to get up.

By mid-morning, a pair of B-26 Bombers from the Air Force came on the scene and worked over the village; the column of Chinese soldiers having already been destroyed, the road going to the west was still open. Shortly afterwards, some P-80 Shooting Star Fighters joined in the fight. Several Chinese had taken refuge underneath the bridge they had previously crossed, and with a ringside seat, we watched as the bridge was cleaned out after each plane made two runs apiece.

Before noon Major General Laurence Keiser, Commander of the 2nd Division, made a fatal decision; the division would move south on the Sunch’on Road.

At dusk, word was passed down the line to prepare for withdrawal. After dark, a few men at a time—from each platoon—quietly slipped off the ridge into the draw behind their position. Then we walked a mile back to where the men of the 15th FA had been patiently waiting. By this time they had already fired all their ammo, and destroyed all their guns.

The 30th of November was a costly day for the 2nd Division, as we ran through “The Gauntlet” and “The Pass.” The division lost four-thousand men killed, wounded, or captured, as we made our way through that seven-mile deep roadblock—it was a nightmare.

As I look back through the “fog of time,” the 23rd was sacrificed to save the division.

* * * * *

We passed through Wonju as we traveled north of Hoensong. Arriving at an open field located next to the road; the field sloped upwards to a line of trees. Since we were a few miles behind the front line, we only set out a couple of guards. Not having any rice straw to lay on the four inches of snow, I trampled the snow down then laid some freshly cut pine branches down for my bed. Crawling into my mountain bag, with only my boots off, I warmed up and went to sleep.

Someone yelled, "Wake up, you guys." I got out of my bag and sat on it to put on my shoe-pacs. However, with the minus twenty degrees, the laces were as stiff as bailing wire. Finally, ten minutes later, I was able to get them on. There was a bonfire down the hill where the platoon had gathered some C-rations. After getting some hot coffee going, I grabbed some rations and heated up a can of something. We were told that we would be marching seven miles further north to engage an enemy roadblock that had another unit trapped. Additionally, they told us to leave our mountain bags and ponchos behind; we could only take one can of rations, as we would be traveling light—I kept a can of cherries.

The three other companies of our battalion were there, and our squad was picked to be the connecting link with the company in front of us. Our job was to spread out, about two-to-three-hundred yards apart, on the road and relay any signals back to the company. The signal I saw was a soldier coming down the road with his rifle raised horizontally over his head, which meant "enemy sighted." As we neared the roadblock, around 4:30 PM, we could hear small arms fire coming from the hills on both sides of the road. We were directed to move along a low ridge line that ran along the left side of the road.

Our squad was either the second or third one up the hill. We were wearing our new white and green reversible parka covers. The white blended in real well with the four inches of snow. There was a ridge about two-hundred yards to our left, from which we were receiving a lot of rifle and machine gun fire. As we deployed to return fire, Sgt. Handcock, our squad leader, attempted to get a better look at the other ridge. He was hit in the neck, and mortally wounded. I had been moved over to assistant BAR man a few days earlier, and I was following Dunbar—the BAR man. As he was setting up to fire on the other ridge, he was hit. Our medic, Vernon (Doc) White, checked him out and he had been creased in the cheek and

shoulder. So, I crawled up to take over the BAR, and as I was looking for a target, the next thing I remember I was setting behind the BAR—with my back to it—several feet down a slope. A bullet had hit me in the left shoulder, spinning me around and knocking me backwards. I had no feeling in my arm, but I wasn't bleeding. Doc was busy with other wounded, so another guy in the squad looked at it and told me to get to the aid station.

While waiting my turn at the aid station, I was hungry so I ate my can of cherries. When my turn came, the medic cut through all seven layers of my clothes; beginning above my left pocket, continuing over my shoulder, and ending a foot or so down the backside. Upon examining my wound, he said the bullet entered the back of my shoulder, near the joint, skidded across the shoulder-blade, and came out; he then applied a dressing. By now the feeling was coming back in my arm.

After we had enough to fill a jeep, we headed to the battalion aid station that was a few miles to the rear. As we headed down the road the part of my clothing that the medic had cut open kept flapping, exposing my bare skin to the cold and snow—I sure wished I had a blanket.

When we arrived, I learned that Bohn and Yarbrow had been killed; they were in a different platoon. Later, I learned that Sgt. Garcia's leg had been broken by a bullet and he was somewhere in the building. I found him. I stayed and talked with him until the medics ran off all visitors. I spent the night sleeping on a litter.

After going through the regimental clearing station, division collecting station, and a M.A.S.H. unit, I ended up in a Swedish Hospital in Pusan. I had hot chow and showers, a cot with a mattress, a pillow and blankets; the next three months were the best ones I had while in Korea.

* * * * *

On the night of May 16, 1951, the Chinese launched an attack against the ROK's 5th and 7th Division's, which were on the 2nd Division's right flank.

A common tactic of the Chinese was to break through your lines and swing in behind you, cutting off your supply and escape route. This is the tactic that was used against the 8th Cavalry Regiment, at Unsan, North

Korea—in October of 1950—and to the 2nd Division, in November, at Kunu-ri.

The road above Hangye was blocked behind the 23rd Regiment and Colonel John (Jack) Chiles, who had taken over from Freeman after the battle at Chipyeong-ni at the end of February; hit the roadblock with infantry and tanks. Having killed some three-hundred enemy soldiers, the roadblock still held. It looked like the only way out was to go over the hills—by foot. To save the two-hundred plus vehicles, Chiles was going to have them run the roadblock. With only a driver per each vehicle, they were to be escorted by tanks. Unfortunately, the lead tanks damaged a bridge, and hit some mines—the plan failed. So, the drivers had to join the rest of the 23rd for a hike over the hills.

The morning after the ROK unit had left our right flank, K Company was moving along a ridge line. Our platoon moved off the ridge proceeding along a dry riverbed, to extend the battalions right flank. Less than an hour later, we were ordered back to the ridge.

Finally, towards the middle of the day, we began to pull out. As we headed for the tree line, we passed through a dozen or so wounded that were being carried on litters by South Korean supply packers; there were even some walking wounded. As our column strung out along the trail, the wounded were nearly a mile behind.

A light rain began to fall, and it continued all day. After a couple of hours, my canteen became dry and several times during our hike we stepped over small streams of rainwater that were running off the rice terraces and hills above us. With my thirst getting the best of me, I took off my helmet and quickly dipped it in one of the streams as I stepped across. I wasn't the only one doing this and knowing what the Koreans used for fertilizer—we drank it anyway.

At times I was able to see the end of the column, and the wounded bringing up the rear. We reached a steep pass on the trail and I stepped out of the column to take a break, and to look back at the valley we just left. As soon as the wounded cleared the woods, the shooting began. The Chinese had finally caught up with us. The litter bearers and the walking wounded, were attacked and began tumbling down the hill. Suddenly, an officer

pulled out some machine gunners, and mortar men to set up a defensive line. He told the rest of us to keep on going—back in line I went.

We were passing through a narrow gorge, around 11:00 PM, when we heard someone from the ridge line yell, “Who in the hell is down there?” Many of the guys yelled back, “King Company, 23rd!” We had reached a defensive line set up by the 38th Infantry Regiment—from the 2nd Division. Boy was we relieved. Over hills and through valleys, we hiked fifteen-to-twenty miles.

We came to a clearing where a dozen tanks were parked, lined up for battle. All of our squads paired up with a tank, digging in on the left, right, and behind our tank. The tankers told us to get some sleep as they took guard duty. Being wet from head-to-toe, as well as my wool blanket, I took an empty ration case, opened it on and laid it on the muddy ground. Wrapping up in our wet blankets, my buddy and I laid on the dry cardboard and went to sleep; by morning we were 90 percent dry.

In all this, I never fired a shot. Wars are like that—unpredictable.

* * * * *

It was the 15th of July 1951 when the 3rd BN, along with the French Battalion moved up replacing the 5th Marine Regiment that was dug in on the “Kansas Line.” This was located on the southern rim of the Punchbowl, which was a large circular hill that had a depression ten-or-fifteen miles across.

The Marines had been there long enough to build bunkers with log and sandbag roofs; as well as stringing a barbed wire fence rigged with trip flares, down the front slope. Our bunker was not deep enough to stand up in, so Richard and I dug down two more feet. Behind us, about fifty feet down the slope, was a spring; we had all the water we needed.

One night, word was sent around that at 10:00 PM some B-29’s would be coming over the valley on a bombing mission, and we were to keep our heads down. When the time arrived we could hear them coming toward us from the other end of the Punchbowl. After the last bomb hit several hundred yards down the slope, I was still hunkered down in my bunker—just in case there were more. Sure enough, another one hit about forty feet away. The explosion splintered the rock into hundreds of projectiles, which

flew in our direction. The third bunker, to our left, collapsed and injured one of the guys. The flying pieces of rock also set off the trip flares, and some of the guys started firing down the hill.

Several patrols were sent down into the valley, and one from Able Company ran into some mines—wounding their medic and several others. The wounded were evacuated by small, two-litter helicopters.

There was one day on the rim of the Punchbowl that was better than any other day—the day I was told I was going home. I traded my well maintained rifle to another squad member for his rusty one: I gave away my blanket: I gave away two cans of pork-and-beans that I had hoarded. Then after the hand shakes, and “have a good trip home” from the guys, down the hill I went—to start processing for my journey home.

When I arrived I was informed that ten days earlier I had been promoted to Sergeant First Class and that I wouldn’t be able to leave until the river receded. The level of the river had raised from the monsoon rains, to the point that a two-and-a-half ton truck wasn’t able to cross. So, back up the hill I went and I was able to get my rifle and blanket back. However, the beans were already gone. For the next three nights I wasn’t able to get much sleep. Finally, word came for three of us to come down, and go home.

Those of us going home gathered in the company area where we traded in our steel helmets for the “badge” of rotation—a fatigue cap. We loaded onto the truck, and as it began to lurch down the road I glanced up the hill realizing I would never see those guys again. These were men that I had lived with through hardships and danger. That brought sadness to the joy of my going home. Many of them never returned home, because during the months of September and October they would be killed at a place called Heartbreak Hill.

We arrived at the division’s rotation center which had tents with canvas cots and hot chow. We stayed there until they had a large enough group for a train, which was about three or four days.

They took us to the train station for our overnight trip to the Pusan rotation center. The cars were equipped with bunks—sort of. They were wooden shelves, four high, on each side of the car. They were just shelves! No mattresses; no blanket; no pillow. However, the most important thing was no one was shooting at us.

Arriving in Pusan, we turned in our rifles, ammunition, and all other field equipment. Needless to say, I was embarrassed to turn in that rusty, clunker of a rifle that I had traded for. After staying there a day, we took a ferry to Sasebo Navy Base in Japan. Here we were told our ship would be ready in two or three days. However, it was day seven and we were still there. Even though we had no passes, some of us decided to sneak off base—after dark—and see the town. We had walked over a footbridge at the rear of the base, when we encountered a barbed wire barrier, which was no match for ex-combat soldiers. Slipping through the wire, we hadn't much more than hit the dirt on the other side when we were surrounded, and captured, by M.P.'s. They took us back to the center commander for proper punishment—latrine duty. Luckily, we only had to do this for one day because our ship was ready the next day.

With a one-day layover because of water in the Aleutians, our voyage to Washington took fifteen days. On the 22nd of August 1951, we arrived at the Port of Seattle. As we moved toward the dock, several harbor fireboats were pumping streams of water high in the air and one of the boats was blaring Frankie Lanes "*Mule Train*" over its loud speaker.

As we disembarked, there was a young lady waiting at the bottom of the gangplank. She said, "Welcome home, soldier," to each of us as we walked off. As we loaded onto buses, the Red Cross was pushing coffee and donuts through the windows to us. With a motorcycle escort, we headed for a ticker-tape parade in downtown Seattle.

We were home at last![\[6\]](#)

~~Thirty-Two~~

John “Rick” Kennedy

5th Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

During the Second World War, students at St. Xavier High School in Louisville, Kentucky frequently worked in defense plants during summer break and after school during the regular semesters. In my junior year, I worked at Jeffersonville Boat and Machinery, building the LST. In my senior year, I was a clerk for the Pennsylvania Railroad after classes. Upon graduation in June of 1945, I immediately enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps—at the age of seventeen. The strict discipline at St. Xavier allowed me to breeze through Parris Island.

After Parris Island, I attended the Naval Academy Prep School in the old remains of Tome University in Bainbridge, Maryland. It was like a highly regimented high school, with the same discipline as Annapolis. Here our main objective was to study for the entrance exam into the U.S. Naval Academy. The school population consisted of two-hundred sailors and fifty Marines. Many of the Marines were veterans of the Pacific Theater, but some were just like me—fresh out of boot camp. Guys like Private Gordon Cooper, who later became a Mercury Seven astronaut, and Private Hugh Krampe, who later became the actor Hugh O’Brian were there as well. Soon the atmosphere at Bainbridge became boring, so half of our group—including myself—left and was put on active Marine Corps assignment.

I was assigned to the Washington Navy Yard located on the Anacostia River at 8th and M Streets, where I was assigned to a special guard detachment. My duties included chasing prisoners, acting as a guard while the Secret Service handled the melting down of obsolete currency plates and U.S. Saving Bonds at the foundry, I stood guard on Pier One while President Truman was aboard his yacht—the *Williamsburg*. At 6:00 AM one morning, I saluted the President as he walked with two Secret Service

men past my post, on his way to get a paper at the front gate. He stopped and told me that he had the Marines, Army, and Navy here today, and everything was in good hands. I saluted and said, “Yes sir, Mr. President.”

After several other assignments, my first Marine Corps experience came to an end and at Quantico I was given an honorable discharge. I then enrolled in school at Indiana University.

In 1950 I attended summer school at the I.U. extension in Jeffersonville, then one day in July—after class—I joined some friends at the Brown Derby bar. Like me, they too had served in the military after World War II. On the television was the news showing the Marines landing in Korea. I told my friends that the war would be over in two weeks. They told me if I thought so much of the Marines that I should go give them a hand. So, the next day I joined a Marine Reserve unit in Louisville; two weeks later I was headed to Camp Pendleton by train for advanced combat training.

* * * * *

Early in November, with roughly fifteen-hundred Marines and a small group of Navy personnel, I boarded the *SS General Collins*. As the lights along the California coastline disappeared into the night, the ships sound system played “Harbor Lights.” Talk about a haunting feeling.

We were put in troop quarters with bunks stacked five-to-six high. Our first night at sea felt like we had run into a typhoon. The ship rose out of the water and the rudder made a terrible noise. Many of the Marines became seasick with no other choice but to vomit on the Marines in the bunks below—it wasn’t a pretty sight. Needless to say, I thought the ship was going to sink. The following day, the sky was blue and the sea calm. Apparently, no one had bothered to tell us about the ocean swells off the coast of California.

As we approached the coast of Japan, we were met by a harbor pilot in a tugboat who led us into the harbor of Kure, Japan. We dropped off some equipment then set sail for Yokohama, where the sailors disembarked. Finally, we reached our destination—Kobe, Japan. After disembarking and storing our sea-bags in a big warehouse, we boarded a train bound for Otsu.

Here we were indoctrinated about our future in Korea, along with gathering our winter gear.

At Otsu we stayed in barracks that were used to house Kamikaze pilots during their final phase of training. Before leaving, I was assigned to the 5th Marine Regiment.

In early December we again boarded the *General Collins*, this time headed for Pusan, Korea. It was late afternoon when we arrived and a band, was playing, "If I knew you were coming, I would have baked a cake." This gave me a sick feeling.

We loaded into boxcars on a slow moving freight train headed for Masan. Before boarding we were given a clip of ammunition, and along the way a Marine fired a round that seemed to have ricocheted throughout the car. Lucky for us, only Private First Class Marines were aboard and because of the train noise no one else heard the shot.

After arriving at Masan, and setting up camp, I was assigned to Charlie Company, 1st BN. Here we waited for the arrival of those men who had spent some thirty days in hell; those men who had been surrounded by over 100,000 Chinese soldiers at the Chosin Reservoir. When they arrived, those young men with their beards looked old and haggard. Their uniforms were torn and spoiled like the homeless on Chicago's Clark Street. Soon, Masan became a city of tents.

We shipped out of Masan aboard an LST with a base plate marker 104 that was built at the Jeffersonville Boat and Machinery Company; this was one of the LST's that I helped build during the summer of 1944. Since I knew every hold in the ship, I led some of the second platoon to more comfortable places to bunk. After two days at sea, we landed at the Port of Pohang.

On the January 29, 1951, we proceeded from Topyong-dong on an all night forced march to the village of Chachon-dong. We left Topyong-dong after sundown in a staggered formation. Our formation was led by Captain Jack R. Jones, our company commander. During the march, the rear of our two-hundred man formation had to double time it in order to keep up the pace with the captain's vigorous stride.

My duty during this mission was as runner for the second platoon, so I was in the middle of this long column—working under Gunnery Sergeant

Owens. He was a veteran of World War II, the Inchon Invasion, and the Chosin Reservoir; Gunny was an old man among boys.

About four hours into our march that included a periodic five minute break every hour or so, it became evident that my training at Parris Island and Camp Pendleton was child's play compared to this. As we continued on, the straps from my field pack and rifle sling were causing pain that was almost unbearable. However, my problems were nothing compared to those guys carrying the BAR's, and machine guns. My legs felt weak from all the weight, and walking in those shoe pacs was awkward and clumsy; it was like I walking in a sea of glue.

We arrived at Chachon-dong just before sun-up. Upon our arrival, we headed for the police station which was a large building that had a watch tower on the roof. Immediately, our executive officer, First Lieutenant Schening, developed a perimeter around the village. We were placed in civilian homes, so we wouldn't be noticed.

In my group, which consisted of the platoon runners, were Bill Boyle and Marvin Wright. Besides us three, were Whit Moreland who was our scout and map reader. Plus, we had a Marine correspondent who carried a portable Remington typewriter; and of course, Gunny. We stayed in what they said was the mayor's house. The first few days were pretty much uneventful.

It was around 4:30 AM on a Friday, when I was awakened by what sounded like my mother popping popcorn for my little sisters. Instead it was the sound of a light machine gun—we all hit the deck. Quickly, we put on our boots, parkas, grabbed our rifles, and headed to the police station which was our command post. As soon as we arrived, Gunny ordered me to climb to the tower on the roof. I had this sick feeling that my first combat mission could very well be my last. As I proceeded to climb to the roof through a trap door, Gunny rescinded the order—much to my relief. Apparently, one of Dick Holbrook's machine gunners had chased the enemy away, and the shooting stopped.

We didn't destroy the enemy, but our presence stopped the destruction of this small village and the death of innocent civilians.

The following day the people returned from the hills and set up a market on the outskirts of town. They sold small trinkets, as well as

prepared food dishes. I remember seeing a mallard duck and a squid hanging from a line on display. The scene was business as usual—as if the war didn't exist. We left the next day.

* * * * *

Early in February of 1951, we moved north, by truck, to Chungju where we were to be the lead company for Operation Killer. On the 21st of February, we assembled near General MacArthur who was seated in his jeep. Using a jeep as an altar, the Navy Chaplain was saying Mass. When he finished, he passed out rosaries to all those in attendance—even those of non-Catholic faiths. It was evident to me; there were no atheists in Charlie Company.

* * * * *

It was now late March, or early April, and the front line across Korea was not well defined, because of a strong enemy offensive after our success in Operation Killer. The exact location of enemy positions was unknown. So, Charlie Company was called upon to advance through the front line of the First Marine Division in hopes of locating advancing units of the Chinese and North Korean Armies.

We moved quickly along the Korean countryside, only stopping periodically—for five minute breaks. Our flanks were rolling hills, so our fire teams covered the high ground to prevent ambushes. This was a grueling march, however after climbing hills all winter long our Marines were in top shape. Lucky for us, this march was not as torturous as the one to Chachon-dong. We Marines of Charlie Company said we would “go to hell and back” for our company commander Captain Jack Jones; and I thought he was taking us up on our word when he volunteered us for this dangerous mission.

Finally, after dusk, we reached our destination—a hill about six-hundred feet in elevation. It seemed to be sitting in a valley all by itself. With good visibility on all sides; we quickly dug our foxholes.

After taking watch during the night, I remember waking up the first morning. It was springlike with small, green sprouts of fern growing close to my foxhole. It was sunny and clear; we could see for miles, but there was

no sign of the enemy. Each day we sent out patrols, but there was no contact with the enemy. I recall on the third day one of our platoon sergeants placed a bright, colored banner in the center of the valley so a plane could make a food and ammunition drop. If the enemy didn't know our whereabouts before—they did now.

The following day I was sent to get some water. I tied nine canteens to a tree branch and went to a stream at the bottom of the hill. Kneeling along the bank, with my M-1 across my knee, suddenly, a beautiful young Korean lady—accompanied by an old Papa-San—appeared. As I filled the canteens they watched me, and I never took my eyes off them.

On day four we were to move out, so we leveled our foxholes and buried all our debris; this way no one could tell we had been there. So, without loss of life, we returned, but it did prepare us for more perilous things to come.

* * * * *

It was the 23rd of May when Charlie Company walked “through the valley of the shadow of death.” On the twenty-second we were dug in on the front line, and to our east we could hear the sound of machine gun fire; on the west side we heard the explosion of artillery. Our front was silent.

Later that night, word came down for us to move out. My squad leader, Paul Embrey, told us that “all hell has broken loose.” Apparently, somewhere in our front line a hole had developed and we were ordered to fill it. After being relieved by another Marine company, we marched down the hill, boarded waiting trucks, and traveled west throughout the night reaching our destination near sundown.

After dismounting the trucks, we began our march up the valley in a staggered column. We came upon a cluster of unoccupied heavy equipment, and in the background we could hear the buzzing sound of swarming green flies—it was deafening. They were hovering over clusters of dead soldiers lying throughout the grassy field. We continued on; there were more dead soldiers. Soldiers with the Indian Head patch, with the inscription “2nd to None” embroidered on their jackets. [*One of these soldiers lying in “the valley of the shadow of death” could have been Ernest Everett Edge.*]. We came to a squad tent that was filled with dead Army officers, one of which

was wearing the gold leave cluster of a major; it was obvious this was the CP. To the rear was a mess tent, which had a few eating stands built among the trees. One of these stands had a staff sergeant standing alone, resting his canteen cup on a board that was nailed to the tree. My first thought was he had been caught by surprise during his morning coffee. However, after further inspection, I believe it was an enemy prank to demoralize the approaching Marines.

As I noticed a red-headed soldier, lying in a shallow parapet, his new size 11D combat boots caught my eyes, because my boondocks had large holes in their soles. I made the trade and wore his combat boots throughout my tour of Korea. I wasn't happy about taking boots from a dead soldier, but I still had more hills to climb—he did not.

Before dusk we reached the crest of the hill that I would guess to have been about seven-hundred feet in elevation. Even though the terrain was very rugged, Charlie Company made a perimeter with deep foxholes. Since the valley in front of us was as flat as an Indiana cornfield, we could see for miles.

As we were making our way down, I lost my footing and my helmet tumbled down into a deep, narrow ravine. I could have located another helmet, but inside mine was a tattered photo of my youngest sister, Nancy. She was dressed in her ballet costume, and I carried it as a good luck piece. She almost died from an appendix infection, but with many prayers said by our mother, she miraculously recovered. With some risk, I retrieved my only object from home. As we reached the bottom, we saw a Chinese truck in the distance headed north. We dirty-faced, young Marines had just seen over two-hundred dead soldiers, and our summer of fighting was about to begin.

* * * * *

In June of 1951 during a battle in the Punchbowl Charlie Company again proved to be a formidable force. The first platoon, under the leadership of Pete McCloskey, and the second platoon, under the leadership of Chuck Daly, led a John Wayne type charge against highly fortified enemy positions, with only minimum casualties. Falling on a grenade to save the lives of other Marines on Hill 610, my good friend Whit Moreland received the Medal of Honor.

* * * * *

Below is an excerpt from a letter I sent home to my parents in August 1951:

Dear Mother and Dad,

...

We take great pride in being able to live and sleep in a dirt hole, and preparing our individual meals, and being able to survive the coldest of winters or the intense heat of summer...

We are the dirty faced boy Marines of Charlie Company. We carry a full pack with clean rifles, hand grenades attached to our cartridge belts and extra bandoleers of ammunition are criss-crossed around our chests. Many of our shoes have holes in the soles from climbing mountains all year long, and our toe nails are black from the dirt from the mountain terrain...

Love Always

Rick

* * * * *

In September of 1951, I rotated back to the states.

~~*Thirty-Three*~~

Byron Dickerson

23rd Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I joined the U.S. Army at the age of seventeen while living in Texas in 1948.

* * * * *

On January 5, 1951, I arrived in Korea where I was stationed with a truck company on Koje-do Island. Later, I was transferred to the 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division. After traveling for about ten days, I finally arrived at the 2nd BN Headquarters on the 17th of May—as a replacement.

When I arrived the 23rd Regiment was located at Chaun-ni, which was on the north side of the Soyang River. At this time the river, which was normally a half-mile wide, was nothing more than a trickle of water.

Around 7:00 AM the following morning I went down for chow. As we hungry soldiers stood in line, the cooks suddenly slammed the lids on the pots and took off running. We began to yell at them, but soon realized they were being fired on by the Chinese. Needless to say, the situation had now turned chaotic.

The ROK unit that was our left flank had left and the Chinese began to rush in. It was now one American division against twelve Chinese divisions. We were outnumbered eight to one. We were completely surrounded.

During all the chaos I was able to grab a can of fruit cocktail, which I was eating when some Chinese soldiers eased up behind me and opened fire with their burp guns. Luckily for me they missed, but they got my can of fruit cocktail. As they continued to overrun us, two other guys and I jumped

into a hole where we stayed until around 9:00 PM that night. Next came the difficult part, finding our way back to our unit. We did, but it took us five days.

During our journey, I almost stepped on the head of a Chinese machine gunner. If he had not been wounded, he would have shot me.

Of one-hundred and seventeen men in our company, ninety suffered injuries. This was consistent with all companies in all three battalions of the 23rd.

* * * * *

On November 25, 1951, I left Korea from Inchon Harbor. As I stood on the deck, while the ship pulled out, I turned my back to Korea. I had already seen enough of the country. However, in 2000, along with other veterans, I went back and was glad I did.

~~Thirty-Four~~

Donald E. Barton

23rd Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

Prisoner of War

On February 26, 1951, I sailed from San Francisco aboard the *General Nelson M. Walker*, headed for Korea. As the ship pulled away, a band standing on the pier was playing, "Farewell to Thee."

After being at sea for twelve days we finally arrived at Yokohama, Japan. From there we were taken to Camp Drake, which was near Tokyo, for processing. A week later, we boarded a train bound for Sasebo, and then from there we took an overnight ferry ride to Pusan, Korea. As we docked in Pusan, on the 16th of March, a phonograph at the dock was playing, "If I knew you were coming, I would have baked a cake."

I would be assigned as a medic to I Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. Most of my time in Korea was spent working out of the 3rd Battalion aid station. Our main area of responsibility was from Wonju to Inje, including the Soyang River.

On the 16th of May, the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) started their spring offensive. The Tenth Corps called it the Battle of the Soyang River. Later it would be known as the "May Massacre." Six Chinese divisions attacked along a twenty-five mile front, overwhelming us. As Item Company withdrew, I was ordered to stay behind and help evacuate the wounded.

The Chinese had set up a roadblock cutting off the Hongchon-Inje Highway, just north of the village of Hangye. Vehicles from both the 2nd and 3rd Battalion's were trapped, and the wounded had to be evacuated overland from the valley floor. This had to be done by going up a hill and through the position held by Item Company.

When word came down for the 3rd BN to withdraw, Item Company was the last to receive the orders. We medics watched as the company withdrew, and waited for the arrival of the wounded. After what seemed like an eternity, but in reality was probably only thirty minutes, they finally arrived. Drivers of the vehicles that were trapped behind the roadblock quickly dismounted and started destroying their vehicles by placing white phosphorus grenades on the engines; these burned through the blocks. Four aircraft dropping napalm were called in to finish the job.

With four men to a litter, we carried the wounded along a ridge line the 3rd BN rifle companies had taken less than an hour earlier. There was a parallel ridge, about three-hundred yards south of our ridge. We hadn't traveled very far when we noticed a group of men, wearing OD rain gear, moving toward us on the parallel ridge. A short distance ahead, both ridges merged into a single trail. As we neared this point, these men began to yell at us. Thinking they were Americans, and happy to see friendly forces, we yelled back. Shortly afterwards, they opened fire up on us with burp guns, almost cutting one of our wounded soldiers in half. For the next two hours we engaged in a firefight. However, being outnumbered, cut-off, out of ammo, and badly shot up, our group of approximately fifty-six men surrendered. On May 18, 1951—I became a Prisoner of War.

A week later on the twenty-fifth, around 3:00 AM, as our group of about three-hundred POW's marched north in two columns on either side of the road, an artillery shell exploded in the middle of the columns killing or wounding several POW's, along with several Chinese guards. A piece of shrapnel hit me in the right shoulder knocking me to the ground. Another POW cried out, "Help, help. Someone give me a tourniquet, my leg is off." Men were yelling, screaming, and crying out in pain. In the pitch black darkness, it was utter chaos.

Fearing more explosions, my main concern was to get the hell away from there as fast as I could. I yelled at a buddy, who was walking behind me, and told him what I was planning to do and for him to follow me. So, we took off running leaving the sounds of the wounded behind. In the process I also left men from Item Company behind; I never saw them again until the end of the war. My buddy and I were found the next morning by a Chinese artillery officer, who spoke broken English. He told us to walk

north and we would not be killed. That night, around dark, we were recaptured by the Chinese infantry.

A piece of shrapnel from my right shoulder caused a steady stream of blood to run down my body and fill up my combat boot. A Chinese medic bandaged my wound with the shrapnel still sticking up through the top of my shoulder bone.

For the next few days we continued walking north and collected small groups of POW's as we went, until we arrived at a POW collecting station—called the Pines. While here, another Chinese medic pulled the piece of shrapnel from my shoulder with a pair of pliers; shattering and splintering a lot of bone in the process. We were here only a few days and our numbers swelled to between two-hundred fifty and three-hundred men.

One morning, the Chinese singled out a small group of ten-to-twelve wounded men, placing the most serious ones on an ox-cart with the others walking behind. In this fashion, we moved from one primitive hospital to another—I was in this group. During this time we were turned over to the North Korean Army. We traveled through Wonson—on the east coast—west to Yong Dock, finally reaching the NKPA's 39th Field Hospital in Pyongyang.

Within days of arriving, blow flies had worked their way underneath my bandages and maggots had begun to eat the infection. I was taken to surgery where two female North Korean doctors, under the supervision of Russian or Czech civilian doctors, operated on me—without the use of anesthetic. They removed shrapnel, and bone fragments, during two surgeries. For the next three months I carried my right arm between the second and third buttons of my fatigue jacket. Finally, the drainage stopped and the wound healed.

During this time frame, the group of wounded men who left the Pines with me died one-by-one. Those who became too weak to travel were left behind, in filthy hospital rooms, to die later. We were thrown out of the 39th Field Hospital, by a North Korean general, after a large U.S. bombing raid almost leveled the city of Pyongyang on August 20, 1951. We then had to walk twenty miles to another prison at Kang Dong, which had been built by the Japanese during their occupation of Korea. It was surrounded by barbed wire, and had guard shacks at fifty-to-seventy feet intervals. Here I was

thrown in with a room full of ROK prisoners. I protested, and that night one of them stole my shoes—I was now barefooted.

On the 10th of September we received word that we would soon be moving; some of the ROK prisoners had already been sent north. Around noon on the fifteenth, a group of one-hundred ten GI's, British, and Turk POW's moved out on foot, on a march that lasted thirty days—and covered two-hundred and twenty miles. Being without shoes, I reminded a North Korean officer that he had promised to find me a pair of shoes for the march. He furnished me with a pair of thongs that had a coarse rope, which formed the upper part of the shoe. The rope rubbed against the side of my feet as I walked, grinding into my feet like sandpaper.

The first day out we marched most of the night—over rocky mountain trails—to avoid being spotted by U.S. Planes. My feet had become a bloody, blistered mess. Finally, I just kicked off the thongs and continued barefooted. I thought to myself, “What a way to start a long march.”

The next morning I went to the officer and showed him my feet. He told me not to worry that he would get me a good pair of shoes. Shortly afterwards, they carried a dead GI out of a room, and I noticed that he too was barefooted. A short time later, the officer brought me a pair of high-top tennis shoes.

Two dozen or more Americans died on the march due to their wounds, dysentery, malnutrition, and just plain fatigue. Some even predicted their own deaths; others got a death stare, which everyone recognized. When one got the stare, he would be dead by morning.

Approximately two weeks into the march we stopped at another Japanese built prison camp, which the Koreans called “Camp DeSoto.” It had log walls and enclosed buildings that resembled an old American fort. During our week stay there, seven more GI's died. We placed their bodies in rice sacks and buried them on a hill outside the compound.

Leaving Camp DeSoto, we marched for another seven days, reaching the Suiho Dam on the Yalu River. Once again a small group of sick and wounded prisoners, including myself, were separated from the main group. We were told we would travel by boat to a hospital at POW Camp #3, which was run by the Chinese. It was here that the North Korean Army turned us back over to the Chinese; we waited for three days for the boat to

arrive. On our last day there, a North Korean guard murdered a British prisoner. Finally, the boat arrived and we took a one day boat ride to Camp #3. Here we stayed for nearly two years—it was October 15, 1951 when we arrived.

In late November we were released from the hospital and joined the company, which was housed in an old schoolhouse, in a Korean village a few miles from the hospital.

In December 1951, an agreement was reached with the Communists at Panmunjom to exchange a list of the POW's held by each side. The list of Americans being held was rushed to the U.S. where each name, and home town, was announced on the radio. This is how many mothers, fathers, wives, sisters, and brothers found out for the first time their loved ones were alive. Some of those captured early in the war were listed as MIA (missing-in-action) for as long as a eighteen months before their families learned they were alive.

In the spring of 1952, the companies at Camp #3 were reorganized and moved. Black soldiers, Brits and Turks, and all ranks above corporal were sent to other camps. Second Company moved around an inlet, in the Yalu River, to a different location about four road miles away. At the new location we were joined by a company of POW's known as "Tiger Survivors," so named because a North Korean officer in charge executed several of their group, and ordered his guards to shoot stragglers on their march north. This group of soldiers from the 24th Infantry Division, and some civilians, were captured in July of 1950. There were originally seven-hundred fifty-eight in the group, but five-hundred of them died—or were murdered—during the winter of 1950-51. The name of each POW who died was put on a list made by an eighteen year prisoner by the name of Wayne "Johnnie" Johnson. When the war ended he smuggled the list out in a hollowed out toothpaste tube.

In June of 1952 the power generating turbines at Suiho Dam were bombed and knocked out of service—permanently. However, this eliminated what little lighting that was available in the barrack we occupied. From then on, until the end of the war, our only light at night was in the form of a small bowl of oil and a cotton wick placed in only one room of the house. When lit it threw off a low flickering light that was

inadequate for reading, but bright enough to find your way in and out of the room.

Life had become monotonous in the camp. Our hopes of being released skyrocketed in June of 1951, when negotiations with the Chinese began in Kaesong; in fact our Chinese guards told us the war was over. However, more than a year later, it appeared the negotiations would drag on indefinitely. We followed the progress of the negotiations in Communist publications like the “New York Daily Worker.”

Winters were especially hard. Everything froze with the temperatures dipping to thirty and forty degrees below zero. Ice on the river was several feet thick, and there was little heat in the rooms of houses we occupied. The heat came from an evening fire built under the “kang” (cooking pot) in the kitchen, which was always at one end of the house. The heat traveled from the kitchen through a flue under the floor to a chimney at the opposite end; thereby heating the floor as it passed through. Sleeping on mats, on the floor, which was the custom, you were either roasting hot or by early morning—freezing cold.

On and off, for nearly two years, POW’s were exposed to Chinese “brainwashing” or political indoctrination. The first phase of the indoctrination was the study of life in the Soviet Union. There was a daily lecture by a Chinese, who we were instructed to address as “instructor so-and-so.” After the study of the Soviet lifestyle, we studied the American economy—this was nothing more than criticism of the U.S. Government. Every bit of corruption, in the history of the American political system, was exaggerated by the Chinese instructor. After a time, some GI’s began to muster up the courage to argue with the instructors, and to voice opposing opinions the Chinese did not want to hear. These men were labeled “reactionaries” and soon began to disappear from the company—sometimes in the middle of the night.

The Chinese set up a hard labor camp, where those who disagreed with them were sent. Others were court-martialed and given prison sentences. One GI received two years for conducting religious services that the Chinese viewed as sabotage. Another one received a one year sentence for refusing to attend a Chinese sponsored sporting event. However, a few GI’s began to cooperate with the Chinese; these men were given separate rooms instead of sleeping five-or-six to a small room. They ate better, were given

Chinese made cigarettes, and given positions of authority within the company.

Near the end of the war these men formed a voluntary study group, even after the Chinese had given up on converting the vast majority. This group continued to meet daily to study communism. Towards the end of the war, it became known throughout the camp that this small group of men would refuse repatriation when the war ended. When the war did end, twenty-three Americans refused repatriation, although twenty-one actually stayed with the Chinese; four were in Second Company. They had been our friends; now they were shunned.

In early June of 1953, several men were transferred to Second Company from the hard labor camp that was located up the river. The Chinese were breaking it up and shutting it down. One day as I was walking down the main street—of the company—I came face-to-face with Willard Ward. Willard was an Item Company soldier who was standing next to me—on the hill—when we were captured twenty-eight months earlier.

As we looked at each other, he said, “You’re dead.” I told him my story of escaping during the confusion when the group was shelled that night some two years earlier. He then explained those who I had known in Item Company believed I had been killed when the artillery shell exploded. He went on to say the column regrouped and moved north to POW Camp #1, taking only a couple of months to reach it. It had taken me five months to reach Camp #3, which was only twenty road miles from Camp #1. We became close friends as the end of the war neared.

The exchange of sick and wounded POW’s, from each side, took place in April of 1953. Now rumors were beginning to run wild that the rest of us would be liberated. Everyone thought the war would be over any day.

The Chinese anticipated there would be retribution against the GI’s who played ball with them for special treatment. That is why—I believe—when the war ended, a small number of prisoners from each camp, including myself, were singled out, accused, and tried for war crimes; we were all given prison sentences. There were five permanent camps—for American Prisoners of War—with as many as seven companies per camp. They were located along a fifty mile stretch of the Yalu River. This group of twenty or more prisoners convicted at trials, were a reminder to other

prisoners to not start any trouble; or receive the same punishment as the progressives.

My trial took place the day the announcement was made that the war was over. Later that day my sentence of one-year at hard labor was read over the camps public address system.

Those convicted of various crimes were of course segregated from the prisoners. They were moved, under heavy guard, to a central location in a camp that previously housed ROK soldiers; they had long since been moved south for repatriation. The senior American officer, with our small group, was a Lt. Colonel who commanded a combat engineering battalion prior to his capture—in December of 1950 at Kunu-ri. He told us to do, or say, whatever the Chinese demanded that would help our case for release.

Some weeks later, after appropriate confessions and apologies were made to the Chinese officials that were holding us; we were taken to the rail head at Antung, North Korean, and put aboard a train bound for Kaesong—which was located on the north side of the demilitarized zone (DMZ). Arriving at Kaesong, the group was put on display at a ceremony that had been arranged by the Chinese for the benefit of their foreign press. Reporters and photographers from all the Soviet Bloc countries were present to document the occasion. The Chinese said we were the worst war criminals from all the Americans they had captured. However, in keeping with their policy of lenient treatment, and after our confessions, they would pardon our crimes and return us to our home country.

When the U.S. and UN military brass at Panmunjom were informed the Chinese would be holding the twenty Americans in our group as war criminals, a senior American official threatened to immediately stop the prisoner exchange. He also said that thousands of Communist prisoners would be held indefinitely until they released, and repatriated, all American prisoners—they released us immediately.

Afterwards we were transported to a tent city where all POW's waiting release were assembled. We again waited for several days before being put on trucks and driven across the four kilometer wide DMZ, to our release point in Panmunjom.

Following our release, on September 3, 1953 at the exchange point in the Joint Security Area, we POW's were taken to Freedom Village. Here we

each received a shower, light meal, a new uniform, and a medical evaluation. Then we were flown, by helicopter, to Inchon.

The *USNS General A.W. Brewster* lay at anchor in the Inchon Harbor. That evening we would board her for our trip home, but first, there was the matter of the Army's inquisition—officially called a counter intelligence debriefing.

Once the *Brewster* was underway, the Army's CIC officers lost no time in calling each POW into a small room to debrief them. A forty page counter intelligence questionnaire, designed by G-2 experts to determine whether or not a soldier had succumbed to Communist indoctrination, was completed and all answers recorded. Then there were another thirty-seven pages of questions that covered the enemy's military capabilities, and infrastructure. The answers given by the POW's during this questioning, were then classified SECRET – SECURITY INFORMATION.

When the debriefings were over, the Army had a large file on every POW. A typical file was as thick as an unabridged dictionary, and some were two feet thick. My own dossier, declassified and released to me in April of 1994, runs two-hundred and seventy-seven pages.

We knew there would be investigations into the conduct of individual POW's who were guilty of making propaganda speeches, and other acts of collaboration with the Chinese. However, no American POW's in the history of our country has ever undergone the level of interrogation as those released at Panmunjom in August and September of 1953.

* * * * *

Returning home from Korea, in November of 1953 I re-enlisted in the Army; with duty at the Presidio in San Francisco, California. That same month, in a ceremony in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, I married Daisy Battenfield. My best man—Willard Ward.

In January of 1957 I retired from military service at Letterman Army Hospital, for reasons of physical disability—a shoulder that Army doctors couldn't fix.

~~Thirty-Five~~

Ernest Everett Edge

23rd Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

Killed in Action

On October 25, 1927, Ernest Edge was born to Ernest and Georgia Edge of Fordsville, Kentucky—the second of twelve children. Like his older brother, he too would be drafted and sent off to war: like his older brother, he too would be killed in action.

His brother, George William Edge, was killed on November 26, 1944 as the 319th Infantry Regiment was moving across France. George's final resting place is in the Lorraine Cemetery in St. Avold, France.

Ernest received his draft notice in August 1950 and in October he reported to Fort Knox, Kentucky. From there he was sent to Fort Eustis, Virginia for his basic training.

Below are excerpts of some of the letters he wrote home:

Fort Knox

October 4, 1950

Hello Mom,

...I probably won't get to stay here. I will know what I am doing in the next few days, and I will let you know. For it is to many here. It is supposed to be 800 here and it is 10,000, so I'll be lucky to stay...

He wrote a letter dated December 12, 1950, from Fort Eustis. This was the camp he transferred to from the overcrowded Fort Knox. Then on February 5, 1951, he wrote his first letter home from Fort Lawton, Washington.

Feb. 19, '51

Ft. Lawton, Wash.

Dear Mom and All,

...Mom do you all know were Delb is? I would like to hear from him. You all get his address and send it to me.

Well Emogene I am sending you some pictures as I promised them to you...You see if you can sell them for a couple thousand dollars a piece, and I will have them made...

[Delb was what he called his cousin, Delbert Rice, who was also drafted in August 1950.]

Feb. 23, 1951

Ft. Lawton, Wash.

Dear Mom

...I saw Aunt Varnie the day I left and she said she got a letter from Delb that morning. And he didn't know where he was going. But, he was leaving from the way he talked. I thought maybe that he was coming out here...

Well Mom you probably won't hear from me for a good many days as I am shipping out in the next few days...

Bird Hunter Edge

Japan

March 16, '51

Dear Mom,

I'll let you know how I am getting along. I am setting on my bunk now, we are fixing to have another clothes inspection in a few minutes...

Well mom we just got here this morning. We was on the water from the 27th of February until the 16th of March. It was lots of boys that got seasick. But, I made it just fine...

We ran into about 2 storms. The water was pretty rough. More so than Rough Creek...

We are not going to stay here but 2 or 4 days and then we will ship somewhere else. I don't know just where, but from the way they talk I don't think I will like it....

Ernest Everett

March 21, '51

Dear Mom,

...Well mom my visit in Japan wasn't very long for I am on a ship headed for Korea. But, I don't know just what part. But, when you all get this letter I will be in Korea...

Ernest Everett

April 30, '51

Hello Pa,

...I wished I was there. But, from the way things looks I don't guess I will be back for a long time. The Chinese pushed us back about 10 or 15 miles in the last few days. I guess you will hear about it, that's one time old Edge got on the run...Just at times it's pretty rough. The other morning I was in 15 feet of them Chinese and I am still here. You probably wouldn't believe that I was that close. Boy my blood pressure came up to about a 110...

Ernest Everett

May 1, '51

Dear Mom,

...I never see anybody but soldiers and hills.

Well I guess you all know that the Chinese are making a big push. Boy I can tell you one thing, they made us high tail it. Well Pop how are you getting along farming? It will soon be time to set tobacco and plant corn.

...I got a letter today from Aunt Varnie saying that Delb was in the 1st Cavalry. Send me his address so I can write to him. It could be that I will see him sometime for I see some of the 1st Cal once and awhile. I saw a boy from back at Ft. Knox in the 1st Cal the other day...

Ernest Everett

May 4, '51

Dear Mom,

...Well you all was saying something about my buddy. Well he is from Missouri he looks something like me. His name is Keene. Most of the boys call me Keene, and him Edge.

Well Pop it's a little early for bird hunting. But, if this rotation keeps I should get home around Xmas for a few days. So, keep in touch with the birds this summer...

Well James...better watch when it gets dry you will sit the roads on fire. It's pretty easy any how on that kind of gas you use.

Well Emogene you want a picture in my combat uniform. Well I am afraid you won't get it for awhile...we are out in the old fields...

Hello Den, how are you making it old timer. I guess you have got you some false teeth by now...Irvin is it warm enough for you to go barefooted....Homer you and Jack are probably going fishing by now. So watch those whales down

there in the creek, don't let one pull you in...Mary I'll write you a letter some of these days when I get time.

Well it's getting kindly dark now. I have got a candle lit to see by, and it's raining. I am wet...

Ernest Everett

May 11, '51

Dear Mom,

...Mom you all said something about me getting out of here in 6 or 8 months. Well I just don't know. I think it depends now on how the war is by that time. For some boys have been here 10 months and they haven't got out yet. So, don't plan on me being home in 6 or 7 months...It's really hot over here now. It's hotter in South Korea than it is in North Korea. We was in North Korea for awhile until they decided they didn't want us up there. This war is just like tug-of-war. We crawl up and run back, so you can see how the war is going. The last time I was on the line it was about 500 of us out in front on a hill. We had about 20,000 enemy, so you can see why we have to run...Well mom I can't think of much to write. I got to answer your alls letter, Aunt Ruth's, Aunt Varnie's, Robert's, and Virgil's...

Ernest Everett

This would be the last letter Ernest wrote home: he was killed in action on May 18, 1951—at Chaun-ni, South Korea.

Newton Duke of Pinston, Alabama was one of the men with Ernest on the day he was killed. He described the following details of that day.

They were in the vicinity of Hangye-ni and the ROK troops to their right had left without telling anyone. Now with their right flank exposed, they were in the fight of their lives. It was pure chaos. They had been completely surrounded by the Chinese, and the fighting to their rear was worse than to their front.

Ernest and four or five other guys had run out of ammunition and were backed up against a large rock. The rest of the squad, with what little ammo they had left, were behind them trying to keep the Chinese off them.

The Chinese were throwing their potato masher grenades at them. As the grenades sailed over Edge's head, he was reaching up catching them and throwing them back. He was one good soldier and he wasn't afraid of anything. By now Duke and the other squad members were out of ammo. The Chinese began throwing their grenades a little faster and Ernest was unable to catch them. He finally succumbed to one of their grenades.¹

* * * * *

Denzil, one of Ernest's younger brothers, remembers the day the family was informed about Ernest's death. Their Uncle Everett and Aunt Ruth Hughes, along with their son Tommy, were visiting and everyone was sitting outside. Suddenly their mother noticed a car coming down the gravel lane, and she dropped to her knees. Having lost her oldest son in Europe, she knew who it was and what they were delivering.²

Ernest's sister, Mary Smith, said she remembers attending the burial service at the Zachary Taylor Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky. She was twelve years old and attended the services with her father, Ernest Lee, and her older sister Imogene. They were driven to Louisville by the daughter of Dr. Denton—a local doctor from Fordsville. Their mother didn't attend, because she was sick. However, it could have been her nerves, for Ernest was the second son she had lost in time of war.³

~~Thirty-Six~~

John Ebnet

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

When the Korean War broke out in the summer of 1950, I, like many other guys across Minnesota, was drafted.

I was sent to Fort Riley, Kansas, for my basic training. During weapons training I struggled with the rifle and pistol; however, I did much better with the .30 caliber machine gun. This may have been a factor in my being placed in a heavy weapons company, instead of a rifle company, when I arrived in Korea.

I had been dating Helen Miller for four or five years. So, before I shipped out, we got married. I figured she had put up with me for such a long time, and if something happened to me I wanted her to have my life insurance.

* * * * *

By April of 1951, I was at Uijongbu—north of Seoul—assigned to D Company, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

It was my second night there and I was sharing a foxhole with a guy who had been there awhile; he was on watch while I was getting some shut-eye. Suddenly, something woke me up and I found that both of us were asleep at the same time. From that point forward, I stayed awake during both watches.

For several months I climbed the hills of Korea with a recoilless rifle and machine guns. One day the mess sergeant was rotating home and I was asked if I would be interested in being a cook. What a decision to make! Continue climbing those hills while dodging bullets and shrapnel; or become a cook stationed behind the front lines—I took it!

We didn't have gas stoves; we had pump-up stoves like a Coleman stove that one takes on a camping trip. They were easy to pack when we were on the move.

I soon began to help organize the kitchen, which helped me obtain my sergeant stripes. In a short time I was able to get some guys from Minnesota—Donald Bialka, Clarence Hentges, and Art Fetting—to help me. These were some of the guys I had met during basic training. It was our job to make sure the men ate well. For breakfast we fixed pancakes, bacon, eggs, sausage, and rolls. We also had a lot of hamburgers.

We would travel to Kimpo airfield, near Seoul, and pick up supplies in a truck that had been captured from the Chinese. The kitchen at the airfield had more than they needed, so we always took plenty.

Besides cooking, we were also in charge of securing purified water; the same water from rivers the war was being fought in. The water was used for everything from drinking to boiling potatoes, washing dishes, and making coffee.

One night as we were preparing the next mornings breakfast, one of our medics stopped in for a cup of coffee. He unbuckled the belt that was holding his .45 pistol, and laid it on the table. When he left, it was missing. After searching frantically for it, he finally left without finding it. During breakfast our Korean helper was serving coffee, and did he get a surprise. From the bottom of one of our large coffee boilers, he scooped up the missing .45.

Even though we were behind the front lines, we were still surrounded by the war. Behind us, the artillery lobbed their shells over our heads to targets in front of us. I watched on numerous occasions as our planes dropped napalm on neighboring hillsides.

The 1st Cavalry Division was relieved in December 1951 by the 45th Infantry Division. The division went to Camp Crawford, Japan, where I stayed for two months. After returning home, I was stationed for three months at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

I was offered the rank Master Sergeant, but I turned it down. Instead, I went home to be with Helen.

~~Thirty-Seven~~

Delbert Rice

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On March 26, 1928, I was the second child—and son—born to Forrest and Varnie Rice. Our father was a share cropper, which meant we moved to a different farm every two-and-a-half to three years. On September 8, 1938, mom had twin girls—Dorothy and Doris. Unfortunately, eighteen days later, Doris passed away.

In 1941, my mother's bachelor uncle died leaving money to his niece's and nephew's. With this money our parents bought a house in Fordsville, Kentucky, where dad was able to get a job working for the I.C. Railroad Company—our days of moving were over.

In June of 1950, two years after I had graduated from Fordsville High School, war broke out in Korea. Two months later, on the 17th of August, I reported to Owensboro, Kentucky for a physical along with thirty-three other guys. Included in this group of men was my cousin, Ernest Everett Edge.

On the 20th of October, eleven of us draftees reported to the courthouse in Hartford where we boarded a bus for Owensboro; it was here that we were inducted into the U.S. Army. From there we were taken to Fort Knox, Kentucky and assigned the locations for our basic training. However, before I left home that morning my brother Bob—a veteran of World War II—gave me some advice: do everything the instructors told me for they were trying to save my life in case I ended up in combat.

I was sent to Camp Pickett, Virginia for my basic training.

* * * * *

The 43rd National Guard from Connecticut, had been at Camp Pickett since September, and we draftees were to bring it up to full strength. I was assigned to Company D, 169th Infantry Regiment.

One day we were on the firing range, firing from the prone position at two-hundred yards. After shooting the target, the person in the pit pulled the target down—like a window—to see where your bullet had hit. He then raised the target and pointed to the bullet hole with a marker, which was a flag attached to a stick.

I had already made several bull's-eyes when the sergeant kicked me in the foot. He told me the next time I shot a bull's-eye to see if I could shoot the marker. After they raised the target, I zeroed in and gently squeezed the trigger. When they pulled down the target, I had my weapon ready for the marker. As soon as it came up—indicating another bull's-eye—I squeezed the trigger, snapping the marker in two. They quickly announced for us not to shoot until the markers were out of the way. The sergeant shook his head, and said, “Damn,” as he walked away.

It's safe to say the military is made up of all kinds. We were practicing throwing grenades. After you threw one, you were supposed to duck behind a log wall that was built into an earthen berm. One of the guys pulled the pin, threw the grenade, ducked down, then all of the sudden he jumped back up—he wanted to watch it go off. Luckily, the sergeant grabbed him, throwing him to the ground.

We were told during basic training never pick up any live ammo from the practice fields, but you always had a few who wanted a souvenir. There was one guy who bunked on the second floor of our barracks that picked up a rifle grenade and kept it in his foot locker.

As some of the guys were scurrying around and getting ready to go home for Christmas—I believe. However, the guy took the grenade from his locker and yelled, “Catch,” to a guy walking up the steps. Realizing what it was, the guy moved over and let the grenade go by. Unfortunately, it hit one of the landings and detonated—sending the guy through the air. Needless to say, we had locker inspections and all souvenirs were confiscated.

* * * * *

After graduating from basic training we were given furloughs. I usually hitch-hiked home, because it was faster than riding a bus and making all the stops. So, I had been waiting for some time when a gentleman stopped—I believe this was around Richmond, Virginia. He told me if he had not come along I would have been standing there for a long time. After getting in, he drove me around the courthouse square. There in the yard was a sign that read, “Dogs and Soldiers Keep off the Grass.” Finally, I made it home.

I can’t remember how long it was, but after spending New Years furlough at home, it was time to head back to Camp Pickett. My brother, Bob, was taking me to the bus station in Hardinsburg. As he backed down the drive, I can still remember seeing mom running down the drive and out into the dirt road waving bye as we turned the corner and out of sight. When we arrived back at camp, we gathered our belongings—it was time to head to the train station. We draftees were headed to Korea; and the 43rd National Guard was headed to Germany.

As we boarded the troop train bound for Fort Ord, California, I shared a bunk section in our car with Ed Tabler, who I had met and became friends with during basic training. We traveled through the southern part of the states going through Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. I remember going through some areas and never seeing a building the entire day. At night, off in the far distance, you could see the faint flicker of a light.

We boarded our ship in San Francisco and sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge as we headed for the open sea. While aboard, Ed and I were in the same bunk section. During our voyage I never got seasick; however, a lot of the younger guys “fed the fish.” It was late March, or early April, when we finally docked in Japan.

We were taken to Camp Drake, where we stayed for several days; getting familiar with all the weapons. While on the rifle range I was squeezing off some bulls-eyes, when the guy next to me asked if we could swap weapons. He was shooting all over the target, and wanted me to zero in his rifle; he wanted to be sure he was going to the front line with a reliable weapon. So, after a few adjustments, I was soon squeezing off another bull’s-eye.

This is an excerpt from a letter I wrote to Uncle Ernest Edge:

Japan,

Monday, April 9

Hello, Uncle Ernest and all,

I am now at Camp Drake, Japan. But we move out tomorrow for where I don't know. But I got a good idea...

From Deb

Ed and I had gone through basic, traveled across southern America, and journeyed across the Pacific together, but when we landed in Korea—we were split up. Ed went to the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, and I went to Company D, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. Company D was a heavy weapons company that was divided into three sections: machine gun, recoilless rifle, and mortars. I was assigned to the mortar section.

* * * * *

After being assigned to my unit, and getting settled in, I wrote home asking mom to get me my cousins—Ernest Everett Edge—address. He was assigned to the 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division. When I received his address, I send him a letter only to have it returned—it was stamped “Deceased.”

* * * * *

The first patrol I went on was a contact patrol; this meant you made contact with the enemy then pulled back.

We were going along some rice paddies that had a small rock wall running along the edge. There was a small ditch, about three-to-four inches deep and twelve-to-eighteen inches wide, that had been formed by the water that ran down from the hills.

As we were walking along, suddenly we heard a whistling sound—then silence. We quickly ran for cover. I laid in the ditch as deep as I could

get; then I heard a “thud.” I slowly looked around, and there about fifteen-to-twenty feet away was an artillery shell protruding from the ground. Not knowing if it was a dud or on a time delay, I quickly made a one-hundred eighty degree turn—on my stomach—and got out of there.

* * * * *

Another one of the mortar squads forward observer had become ill and was evacuated. They were in need of a FO, so I volunteered. Their squad was about three-quarters of a mile away, but due to the terrain and enemy in the area it took me six-and-a-half hours to reach them. They were going to pull out the following morning, so I was able to get a nights rest.

When morning came, my radio was dead. The captain told me that I was no good to them without a radio, so I was to return to my squad. As I headed back, they took off down through a valley.

* * * * *

We had corned beef in our C-rations, which was the nastiest tasting stuff I’ve ever eaten. So, everyone either threw it away or gave it to the locals. One of our guys gave his to an elderly lady and within twenty minutes of eating it—she was dead. It wasn’t known if the corned beef was too rich for her system, or what happened.

* * * * *

One morning after everyone was up, and stirring around, the guy pulling last guard duty came walking down the trail. He had his weapon slung over his shoulder and was carrying another one as he had an enemy soldier in front of him. I told one of the other guys to take the prisoner back to company headquarters and let them take care of him. Another soldier came up to me and said, “Sarge, you might want to check Yum Yum’s weapon.”

So, I yelled for Yum Yum (Johnson) to come over to me and that I wanted to see his weapon. After handing it to me, I jammed back the bolt to find an empty chamber.

I asked, “Yum Yum how come there is no round in your chamber.” You could have knocked me down with a feather with his response.

He said, “Oh sarge, I couldn’t hurt nobody.”

I said, “No, but you could let them come in here and hurt us.”

Shortly afterwards he was transferred out of our unit.

* * * * *

In school, I read about a soldier during the Civil War who was shot at by opposing soldiers as he rode by them on his horse; and no one hit him. Being a good shot with a rifle, this was too hard for me to comprehend until one day I witnessed it with my own eyes.

The colonels had their own guards, and one day a “gook” came out of the woods. His guards began shooting at him as he ran down a path, for about one-hundred yards, before he ran back into the woods. The colonel said, “Damn! I ought to send every one of you guys back to the States for more training.”

He was so close; I believe I could have hit him with a slingshot.

* * * * *

When we were in reserve, we were always going through training and attending lectures. I would give a lecture on the importance of the M-10 Board, which was used by the mortar sections to calculate the range of their target, and for accuracy in firing.

The first two rounds were fired for adjustments; the third round was fired for effect.

* * * * *

We were moving our position, when we noticed the enemy moving along a ridge line trying to circle behind us. I immediately started directing fire; right, left, up thirty, fire for effect; all by sight. We were successful in keeping them from coming in behind us—they withdrew.

I told the captain that I was sorry for using direct sight instead of normal calculations. He told me that I had done “a fine job” and not to worry about it.

* * * * *

During the later part of July, four inches of rain fell in one day, thereby, causing the river to flood. Some units—including D Company—were cut off from the rest of the battalion. We had run out of C-rations, and they were unable to get supplies to us. So, to survive we ate potatoes and corn from a nearby farm and our water supply came from the flooded river.

* * * * *

Monsoon season had set in, and we had been wet for ten straight days. A few of us guys were standing around talking, when all of a sudden a guy came out of his tent—screaming. He was saying that he was going to the top of the hill and kill all the “gooks,” so he could end the war and go home.

It took three of us to subdue him and load him into a jeep so he could be evacuated out.

* * * * *

After being confined to our foxholes for several days, we were finally able to come out for a breath of fresh air. I was sitting on my helmet, next to my hole, when another soldier saw me and crawled over to talk. We had been there several minutes when I noticed a flash from a recoilless rifle.

I told all the guys to hang on, because the “gooks” would try to knock-out that recoilless rifle. All of the sudden, you could hear an artillery shell coming in. As I dove for my hole, the guy I was talking to dove between my legs—beating me to my hole.

He got hit in the hip with a piece of shrapnel; I yelled for a medic. After the medic attended to him and got him out of there, I was able to get my foxhole back.

* * * * *

One night “Tiny” [Everett] Waggoner and I were standing on an overhang, when all the sudden Tiny said, “Dang! A ‘gook’ just hit me in the leg with a grenade.” I told him there was no way. So, he pulled down his pants and sure enough there was a red spot on his leg where he had been hit.

When daylight broke the next morning, we went back to the overhang. As we looked down the hill, there lying about twenty feet away was the grenade. Luckily for us, it was a dud; if not, we could have been seriously wounded, or killed.

* * * * *

One night our mortars were set up out front, the recoilless rifles were on the flanks, and the machine guns were to our rear. Around 0200 hours, one of the machine guns opened fire. I quickly radioed back and told them to get that guy off that gun—before the enemy zeroed in on us—or we would. The gunner said he thought he heard something; come to find out he was only sixteen.

Needless to say, the following morning he was taken off the front lines.

* * * * *

We had a soldier down that we couldn't get to. There were a few tanks in the area and the tank commander asked if he could help; I replied, "Yes." I pointed out the soldier to the tank commander, who was about two-hundred yards out.

After spotting him, he climbed back into his tank and had his driver drive out and straddle the wounded soldier. Once the tank straddled him, one of the crew members opened the escape hatch—located in the bottom of the tank—and pulled the soldier into the tank returning him to safety.

* * * * *

I always had men to stand guard for two hour intervals, and I was always the first one to be woken up. We had a fresh recruit, who with his gung-ho attitude was going to end the war. He was placed on the last guard, and after waking me I told him to wake everyone else. Shortly afterwards, I again told him to wake everyone up. He said he had, but I told him there were two soldiers lying underneath the tarp—as I pointed to it. Walking over to it, he jerked back the tarp—exposing the bodies of two dead soldiers waiting to be taken back to headquarters—and vomited up everything he had eaten in the last few days.

If looks could kill, I would have been dead. That was probably the cruelest thing I have ever done in my life, but I believe it saved a young man's life. The following day he transferred to the supply company.

* * * * *

One day there was a loud yell coming from the cook's kitchen. I immediately grabbed my weapon and ran towards the back of the tent. As I rounded the corner, there were a couple of enemy soldiers exiting the back of the tent; I only had one choice—shoot.

The soldiers dropped to the ground, never to get up. These are the scenes that one never forgets.

* * * * *

As we were bunking down one night, another soldier and myself crawled into a bunker that had a log roof covered with dirt. The rest of the guys were set up in tents not far from the opening of the bunker. In the early hours of the morning I woke up covered in dirt and I felt around for the other soldier, only to find that he was gone. I crawled over to the bunker's opening and cautiously whispered out the names of my men—no one responded. So, I grabbed my weapon and started down the hill looking for them.

Finally, I located them; they had moved to a safer place. Apparently, during the early hours of the morning we had been shelled by enemy artillery, with the bunker taking a direct hit. And since I didn't come out with the other soldier, they assumed I was dead.

It's hard to believe one can sleep through artillery shelling like that, but when one goes on very little sleep for days—they can become "dead" tired.

* * * * *

Our company was on the move when we reached a safe area—stopping to rest overnight. The captain yelled, "Sgt. Rice take a bazooka and one man with you to secure the area; no tanks get through." I gathered my men telling them the captain had a dangerous mission and that I needed

one man to go with me. Immediately, Sgt. Lawrence Saunders stepped forward saying he wanted to go.

I had a lot of good men in my platoon, and Saunders was no exception.

After grabbing the bazooka, and ammo, we set off back down the road. Finally, we came to where the road made a ninety degree turn to the left. We then climbed up a steep bank where we could look down on the road, and when we got situated we came up with an escape plan. I told Saunders after we knocked out the lead tank, I was going to run down the back of the hill. He told me I better not slow down or he would run over me.

We mostly set there listening to the silence, then just before dark we heard a tank start up. As it moved towards us, the earth began to shake—by now our adrenaline had kicked in. The tank got within one-hundred yards of us when it stopped momentarily. Before reaching our spot, there was a road that turned left. Suddenly, the tanks engine revved up as it headed up the other road. Soon, the tank had rumbled out of earshot, and sight.

Saunders and I joyfully returned to the platoon.

* * * * *

One day Charlie Company was too far out in front when they began to get overrun. They had to fall back, so their flanks closed together. I was instructed to take four men and hold as long as possible; Charlie Company would be passing through us.

Along with the men, we took two mortars. The Chinese were coming over the hill behind Charlie Company like ants. So, immediately I started calling in drops—visually. As men from Charlie Company rapidly passed through us, they said, “Good luck Sarge.” I told them it was going to take more than luck.

Suddenly, a tank came up along our right flank and started firing directly at the Chinese. I quickly yelled to the tank commander to get his tank out of there. He told me he was okay; I agreed, but told him the Chinese would be zeroing in on his tank, which would make it rough on us.

Finally, all of Charlie Company had made it through—now it was our turn to leave. We didn’t even have time to remove the mortar tubes from their base plates. After tossing them into the back of the truck, the guys

jumped in. I quickly jumped onto the running board, hanging onto the door as we sped away.

Luckily, we made it out with no casualties or injuries.

* * * * *

We had been firing continuously for hours when a gunner yelled, “Misfire on #4.” I had the gunner unscrew the tube and slowly turn it upside down as I was prepared to catch the shell—nothing came out. So, I packed the tube with a small sand bag and called for a truck driver to take it to Ordnance. About thirty minutes later he returned with the tube, telling me there was no projectile in the tube.

After daylight we found the undischarged round lying about fifty yards out in front of us. To give the rounds a little more “umph,” we placed small cellophane bags of gunpowder between the shells fins. Due to the continuous firing, the mortar tubes had become extremely hot. Apparently, before the round hit the firing pin, the heat from the barrel ignited the bags. This caused the round to launch from the tube.

* * * * *

On the 3rd of October, we, the 1st Cavalry Division, along with several other units, launched the offensive—Operation Commando. At the end of the first day of fighting we could turn around, look down and see where we started from. The fighting was so brutal; we probably didn’t even advance a quarter of a mile. By the end of the operation, thirteen days later, we had pushed the Chinese farther north across the 38th parallel.

At the end of the thirteenth day, less than seventy men from the 1st Battalion walked off the hills. As a jeep was going along one of the roads, it was stopped by two soldiers; as they got in, they said that was all the transportation Charlie Company needed.

* * * * *

I believe it was around Thanksgiving when we, the 1st Cavalry Division, received word that we would be leaving Korea; we were going to Japan.

Around the middle of December, the 7th Cavalry left Inchon headed for Camp Crawford, which was located on the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan. The 5th Cavalry Regiment had already left, the 8th Regiment being the last to leave Korea.

The camp was above the 38th parallel and it was bitterly cold with lots of snow. While at Camp Crawford we trained in the snow wearing white camouflaged uniforms. We also skied behind Weasels, which were a tracked vehicle, and we even played softball on two feet of snow.

In early February, I received orders to rotate home. When time came, I boarded the troopship *Marine Adder* bound for Seattle, Washington. After arriving, all soldiers going to bases east of the Mississippi River were flown home; those going west, went home via train.

I arrived at Fort Knox on Washington's Birthday, which happened to be a Friday. After checking in, I was informed that everyone was confined to the base for the weekend. I in turn, informed the clerk that I had just returned from Korea, and I was going home; either through the gate or over it, and it didn't matter to me which way. Needless to say, I was granted a weekend pass.

When I returned to the base, I was walking between two barracks when I heard someone yell, "Hey, Rice."

I thought to myself, "Who knows me here." I turned around, and there stood Ed Tabler. Needless to say, we didn't sleep much that night. We stayed up talking about our last ten months.

One time while on leave, I went riding around with my cousin James Edge—brother of Ernest Edge. We saw two young ladies, around seventeen, playing in the front yard of one of their homes. Of course I had James stop, and I got out and introduced myself to one of the ladies—Shirlene Fuchs. We began to date. However, I would be transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

As luck would have it, Shirlene had a brother—Maurice—attending medical school in Kirksville, Missouri. After graduating from high school, she came to stay with her brother and his family. Many a weekend I burned up the road between Fort Wood and Kirksville.

* * * * *

While at Fort Wood, I was in charge of one of the barracks. I told the guys that I was easy going, but if they got my butt in a sling I would return the favor.

One morning during inspection, I was calling roll. When I came to “Smith” two guys said, “Here.” I told everyone to fallout to the barracks, and when I called their name for them to come outside. This time when I called “Smith” no one came out. He had apparently gone home and was late getting back—he spent some time in the brig for being AWOL.

Another sergeant and I were going to take a couple of the guys to St. Louis to watch a Cardinals baseball game. However, that weekend everyone was confined to base, so the guys said they wouldn’t be able to go. I told them since they were not confined to their barracks, to be ready to leave when we came by.

Going into the clerk’s office, I asked to see all weekend passes. As I looked through them, I palmed their passes and put them in my shirt pocket. I then handed the rest back to the clerk saying they looked in order. I then picked up the other sergeant, and then the two recruits and we went to St. Louis. After returning, I again went to the clerk’s office asking to see the weekend passes. Removing their passes from my shirt pocket, I replaced them back in the pile. I told the clerk they all looked in order, then walked out.

Being the only one on base that had been to Korea, the captain asked me one day if I would escort the body of a fallen soldier home. I told him that during my time in service I had never disobeyed an order. However, if this was an order, I would not do it. I went on to tell him that I had seen enough death during my nine months in Korea and for him to see if he could find someone else. Shortly afterwards, he informed me that there was a guy on base from the same hometown as the fallen soldier, and that he had volunteered to escort the body home.

When it was graduation time, all the guys from the barracks marched around the parade ground for inspection by the base commander. As they marched they were guided by a soldier carrying a guidon—I was that soldier.

When the young recruits from my barracks graduated they presented me with a gift; a Parker pen and pencil set, which I still have to this day.

The recruits from the other barracks also gave their sergeants gifts—the finger.

* * * * *

I was discharged from the U.S. Army on July 5, 1952. On the 6th of July, Shirlene Fuchs and I were married.

~~Thirty-Eight~~

Fred Redmon

1st Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

As I hauled wheat from Kahlotus, Washington to the Port of Paso, I never envisioned that six months later I would be in the hills of Korea.

A reserve second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, here I was in Korea after an abbreviated “special” basic training. Having never fired an M-1 with live ammo, my Marine Corps experience was being one of two Marine midshipmen at the University of Washington; and one two week camp. I wasn’t sure I was ready, but I was told that I was.

* * * * *

The following describes the events of April 22 through 26, 1951.

As a leader of the second platoon of George Company, 1st Marines, I stood there on that hill as the battalion chaplain came up the line talking to the troops. When he reached me, he stopped and asked how I was doing after the events of the past few days. I told him I didn’t know how to answer that question. He firmly grasped my arm and said, “Lieutenant, just be ready.” At the moment I didn’t understand the importance of his words.

The last three days had been very busy and the casualties heavy. After a visit to the regimental aid station, our third platoon Gunnery Sergeant—Harold “Speedy” Wilson—was on his way to Washington D.C. to meet with President Truman. He was to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, for his action the night before.

We were on Hill 902 and ready for a Chinese attack. After an all night firefight, where Wilson’s third platoon met the enemy head on and held our line, we moved off the hill. We settled in on a long ridge line with a far reaching valley to our front. To our rear was a peaceful looking river where

the Army Engineers had constructed a first class bridge. To our right was a platoon from Charlie Company, 5th Marines.

With the Chinese close at hand, adrenaline was running high, thus sleeping was not a good prospect. Being on constant alert, we noticed a hay stack to our front that, as the day went on, changed positions. Our mortar section discovered the hay stack was in reality a tank positioning itself to fire on our lines. Throughout the night the Chinese kept probing our lines and started small fires. This lasted until dawn, but we held our lines.

Early the following morning the battalion operations officer, and our company CO, came upon the ridge line. We had a meeting about our southern advance that was slated for that afternoon. It was decided that George Company would be the rear guard, and my second platoon was to be the rear guard for the company. When everyone was across the river, the Army Engineers were to blow up the bridge.

Battalion headquarters would move across first followed by our rocket launchers. Once across, they would fire over our heads into the valley, in front of the ridge line. In the process, the rockets would generate clouds of smoke and dust; thereby giving the enemy a great target. Now George Company pulled out and crossed the bridge. As soon as the first and third platoons crossed, our second platoon was to “double time” it from our position on the ridge line and cross the bridge.

The company had cleared the bridge, and we took one more look to our front and observed enemy activity. As word came for us to move out, there was a tremendous explosion to our rear. I turned just in time to see the bridge rise up, about ten feet, and then settle into about five feet of water—in that peaceful river.

Our route south had suddenly turned into two smoking piers on each side of the river. We had no radio, or any other means of communication with the company, as they were now out of sight. So, we immediately sent a squad, wading across the river to set up a machine gun section. When they were ready, we readied our weapons and ammo, and waded through the chest high water. At this point the river was about thirty yards wide, but the current was gentle and caused us no problem.

The over anxious Army Engineers were already far south, as I imagined they may have sensed they may be the target of a group of wet

Marines. After crossing we immediately began marching to catch up with the rest of the company, which took about forty-five minutes. Soaking wet, we trudged about thirty miles that night. There was no more complaining than one would expect from a bunch of wet, pissed off Marines.

However, it was just one of those things!

~~Thirty-Nine~~

William McCraney

35th Infantry Regiment

25th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I joined the U.S. Army, at the age of seventeen, while living in Covington, Louisiana. I was sent to Chaffee, Arkansas for my basic training.

After basic training, I was assigned to the 17th FA from September 1949 until May 1950. After a thirty day leave, I was then transferred to Fort Lewis. At Fort Lewis I was assigned to the 65th Combat Engineers, which was stationed in Japan. On the way over to Japan we learned for the first time of the war in Korea. After spending two weeks in Japan, I was sent to Korea with the 25th Infantry Division.

* * * * *

From May 20 through June 8, 1951, the Eighth Army initiated Operation Detonate, which was to retake Line Kansas. This operation would involve seven American divisions; the 1st Marine, 1st Cavalry, 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions.

By the time Operation Detonate began, I was no stranger to combat; having been wounded twice; once at the Pusan Perimeter and the other at Unsan, North Korea. While at Unsan, the outpost I was on only had fifty-seven men. When the Chinese started coming, they came by the thousands. What we experienced must have been what Custer thought when he saw all those Indians!

The following is an account of Fox Company's, taking of Hill 329 on the 21st of May, 1951. I had been with Fox Company since the latter part of July 1950.

* * * * *

With the exception of Captain Holiday—our company commander—we had all new officers; the division officers had rotated out in April. Excluding the new replacements, the captain had led most of the new guys in seven or eight bayonet attacks during March and April. So, by the 21st of May they pretty much knew what to do. First Lieutenant Paul Clawson took over the first platoon, and First Lieutenant Willis Jackson had the third platoon—I was in the first platoon.

My platoon leader—and one fearless SOB—Sgt. “Pop” Cameron, along with my squad leader, Sgt. Virgil Fisher, taught me everything I knew about combat. Sometime in April, Sgt. Cameron was wounded and sent back to the States; on the 5th of April, Sgt. Fisher was killed in action.

May finally arrived and they had yet to name a replacement for Sgt. Fisher. The lieutenant told me he wanted me to take over as squad leader, even though I was only a PFC. He went on to add that he had checked my records, which were good, and had already put me in for a promotion—to corporal.

On the 20th of May, Easy Company was to be the lead company for our battalion, and they were to take the first ridge. The following day we were to take Hill 329. As they worked their way up the hill, they came under intense fire. Sgt. Donald Moyer would be mortally wounded that day, as he threw himself on a grenade, saving the lives of some of his fellow soldiers. Sgt. Moyer was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

On the evening of the twentieth, Lt. Clawson told me that my squad would be leading the attack the next day. For most of the night the rain poured down and it was still raining when morning arrived. They fed us a hot breakfast, which isn’t as great as it sounds; since a front line soldier knows that by the time you get through a chow line—in the rain—the only thing worth eating is the bacon.

One of our new replacements was an old sergeant that had been court-martialed and demoted to a private; he was over fifty years old. As I was assigning men to their positions, I assigned him to bring up the rear. Needless to say, he was upset and said I only placed him there because I didn’t believe he could keep up with the younger guys. I was finally able to convince him that I needed someone in the rear who could keep a cool head, and help with the wounded. He accepted my explanation, but he was

right—I thought he was too old to keep up. However, by the end of the day I regretted my decision.

As we advanced up the hill we came upon a bunker that we believed was abandoned since we had not received any fire from it. The rain was still coming down hard, and when the old sergeant came to it, he went inside—I guess to get out of the rain. Unknown to us, there were a couple of Chinese in the bunker and they killed him. If he had not been bringing up the rear, the other guys would not have allowed him to go in there. However, later in the day, another squad went into the bunker and killed the Chinese.

Before we started our advance our tanks shelled the hill, but it didn't seem to be very effective. The hill was steep, muddy, and the rain never stopped. You would take one step forward and slide two steps back. There was a large outcrop of rocks about two-thirds of the way up. After reaching these rocks, I took my men around the right side. We hadn't gone thirty yards, when all hell broke loose. A machine gun opened fire on us, pinning us down. I had been scared in battle before, but the combination of the heavy rain, the mud, and the heavy machine gun fire just about topped them all.

The machine gun fire was going over our heads, hitting the men in other squads back by the rocks; Lt. Clawson was pinned down behind the rocks. According to eyewitness accounts, the lieutenant moved up to the head of the unit and killed three enemy soldiers that had been holding up their advancement. After one of his men fell wounded, the lieutenant disregarding his own safety, under heavy fire, carried the wounded soldier out of harms way. Upon returning, Lt. Clawson picked up the wounded soldiers weapon and continued their advance up the hill. Moments later, he was killed by machine gun fire.

By the time word reached me that the lieutenant had been killed and our platoon sergeant wounded and out of action, our condition was deteriorating fast. I knew something had to be done, and fast. So, I moved close enough to destroy the machine gun that had killed the lieutenant with a grenade.

In the hole with the machine gun, were two or three Chinese soldiers. So, I fired a few rounds to be sure they were dead. As I surveyed the rest of the hill, I didn't like what I saw—hundreds of Chinese. I looked down at

my M-1, with its eight rounds per clip, and suddenly my situation seemed pretty dismal. About that time I thought to myself, "What the hell, I'll use their machine gun!" Quickly I got it into firing position and as I was looking for a target, they spotted me. They threw several grenades at me. Some went over my position. However, one landed on top of the hole, and two landed in the hole—with me!

Immediately, I jumped out and rolled into a tight ball just as they exploded. After the smoke cleared, my right leg was full of shrapnel and I wasn't able to hear a sound. Dazed and disoriented, I noticed that both the machine gun and my M-1 had been destroyed. I quickly took off running down the hill, to my squad, to find anything else to shoot with.

Calling for my BAR man, I was informed that he had been wounded. So, I yelled for his BAR and ammo, which someone brought to me. After inserting a new clip, and placing two more in my jacket, back up the muddy hill I went. With some of my men following me, it started raining grenades as we got within twenty yards of the top; again we were pinned down. I got up and continued up the hill, firing at everything that moved. As I reached the top, I turned around and saw that my guys, along with men from other squads, had followed me.

Lt. Jackson's platoon, who had come up the left slope, was on top of the hill. I was glad to see them! Later, I found out that Jackson and his men had a hell of a time getting to the top. The lieutenant had been wounded while his men were pinned down, the first time. After our artillery had shelled the enemy, he was able to continue their attack only to be pinned down a second time. Though wounded, he charged the enemy's position, taking away one of the enemy soldiers weapon using it to beat him to death. He then chased several more away, and as they ran down the hill, he threw grenades at them, killing three more with his rifle. Finally, the company commander ordered him to go back and have his wound looked at.

After we got some control of the hill, I realized how bad my leg was. As I headed back down the hill, I came upon one of my guys lying on the ground. He said he had been hit in the chest and could barely breathe. It being a chest wound, I knew there was nothing I could do for him, but to get him to the aid station. They guy must have weighed about one-hundred eighty pounds, and I may have hit one-forty. I told him to get on my back, and then down the hill we went.

We began to take sniper fire from an area of the hill that was still under enemy control. As I carried him, I would slip and fall in the mud; only to get up and go again. Nearing the bottom, I fell again, but this time I was unable to get up—I had lost too much blood. Blood was running down my leg and had pooled in my boot. Lying there, I decided I would check his wound. Taking off his jacket, I got a surprise—no blood. After further investigation, he had a piece of metal, about the size of a thumbnail, just above his left nipple; I picked it off! I told him to get up off his ass and that he could carry me the rest of the way.

Later, we learned there were over three-hundred Chinese that were equipped with 81mm mortars, machine guns, automatic weapons, small arms, and grenades, dug in on Hill 329.

On the 21st of May, it took us three hours and thirty minutes to buy Hill 329. We paid for it with the lives of five men: thirty-three men were awarded the Purple Heart: three men were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross—First Lieutenant Paul Clawson (KIA), First Lieutenant Willis Jackson, and myself.

I am proud to have served in the U.S. Army, but never as proud as I was to have served with that group of soldiers on that hill in Korea on that miserable day in May of 1951.

~~*Forty*~~

Richard Esser

USS New Jersey – BB-62

U.S. Navy

In the fall of 1947, at the age of eighteen, I enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve; I was stationed at the Naval Training Station in Lorain, Ohio.

With the Korean War starting in June of 1950, I was called to active duty in December 1950. I reported for my thirteen weeks of training at Great Lakes, Illinois. After basic, I was assigned to the battleship *USS New Jersey*.

On April 5, 1951, I boarded the *Jersey*, which was moored at Norfolk, Virginia. The following day we cruised out of the harbor, steaming our way to the Panama Canal. Making our way through the canal, we headed to Pearl Harbor then on to Yokuska, Japan, arriving in early May. We then departed Yokuska Harbor headed for Task Force 77—where we relieved the *Missouri*.

I was assigned to M Division, which handled the four engine rooms. Here I spent a day learning the messenger job, which involved reading the instruments every hour. However, the following day I reported to the mess deck for three months of mess cook duty, which turned out not to be such a bad job. There was a lot of free time, plus I was assigned to the 40mm AA gun on the starboard side.

It was during this time, I met another cook—Robert Osterwind. However, I never got to know him too well. On the morning of the May 21, 1951, the *Jersey* came under her first encounter with the North Koreans.

On this morning, Bob and I had finished securing from morning mess when several of us cooks gathered top side, aft of #3 turret. The ship was anchored in Wonson Harbor firing ground support. Suddenly, water spouts rose up on the port side from enemy fire; general quarters was sounded. I ran to the 40mm ready room on the fantail. Bob ran forward, on the port side, and started up the ladder to his battle station—he never made it. A

piece of shrapnel pierced his chest below his right arm, severing his aorta. He died instantly.

The *Jersey* saw action in the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf; Robert Osterwind was her only fatality.

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After finishing my tour as mess cook, I returned to the #2 engine room. Here I resumed the duty of messenger.

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The *Jersey* stayed in Korea, and Japan, until November of 1951. Then she was relieved by the *Wisconsin*. We returned to Norfolk in early December.

I was discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1954.

* * * * *

In 1986 I attended my first reunion of the *New Jersey*. As I was at the registration desk, I noticed a ship's clock—with a plaque—that was to be raffled off. The inscription on the plaque read:

In memory of SA Robert H. Osterwind – Korea – May 21, 1951.

ETC Michael W. Gorchinski – Beirut, Lebanon – October 23, 1983. Comrades and shipmates who have since passed on.

Michael Gorchinski was a sailor from the *New Jersey* who was among the two-hundred and forty men that were killed during the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon.

The clock, and plaque, was made by the father of Michael Gorchinski; I purchased ten dollars worth of tickets. During the dinner banquet they drew the winning number—72722; it was mine.

Today, the clock is mounted on the wall above the fireplace in our living room. Every time I glance at it, Bob and May 21, 1951 flash across my mind.

~~Forty-One~~

Howard Camp

19th Infantry Regiment

24th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

On January 8, 1951, I was inducted into the U.S. Army. I spent sixteen weeks at Fort Knox, Kentucky, for Armored Infantry Basic Training of which 95 percent was infantry training.

After going through Camp Stoneman, California, I left for Korea on the 10th of May, 1951. When I arrived in Korea I traveled through Ascom City before reaching my duty station—Company L, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. A guy that had gone through basic with me was assigned to G Company. His last name was Goff, and he was from Kentucky; he was killed the first day he was in combat.

* * * * *

It was July and we jumped off into attack. As I was climbing up the hill, I was grabbing onto small trees, or bushes, to help pull myself along. I looked down and noticed dirt being kicked up between my legs. Suddenly, it dawned on me that someone was trying to kill me.

* * * * *

On another occasion, while we were attacking. I jumped into what I thought was an abandoned foxhole; lo and behold, it was full of small frogs. Apparently, they must have been deposited there as eggs. I found another foxhole.

* * * * *

On Saturday morning of October 13, 1951, Love Company jumped off on another attack with two objectives. We were successful in obtaining

both. That night we settled in, but were on full alert expecting a counter-attack which never materialized.

We took our first objective, along with capturing twenty-two enemy soldiers. We were to send two rifle squads down into the valley, and come in around the back of the enemy, thereby cutting of their escape route.

My squad was hit by mortar fire. I was behind our point man, with the rest of the men following. The mortar shells hit between me and the number three man—PFC Wayne Holland. Out of the ten men in our squad, seven were wounded and PFC Holland was killed in action. I was one of the wounded.

Before returning to my unit, during the first week of January, 1952, I had been to a M.A.S.H. unit, the 121st Evac Hospital, the *USS Consolation*, and the 279th Army General Hospital, which was located in Osaka, Japan. During this time I underwent three surgeries to remove all the pieces of metal from my body.

* * * * *

I was relieved from active duty on October 8, 1952.

The U.S. Army was one of the greatest teachers I ever had in my life. When I bleed—my blood is green.

~~Forty-Two~~

Rexford Glass

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On the 19th of June 1951, I arrived at Inchon, South Korea. From there I went to the 15th Replacement Company where I was assigned to Company D, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. When I arrived at D Company, on the twenty-first, they were located on the Imjin River.

From the 27th to the 29th of June we were on the first line position at Uijongbu, South Korea. On the thirtieth we moved to the second line position on Line Utah, where we remained until the 14th of July. Then on the fourteenth we moved to Line Kansas, which was in the Iron Triangle. The following day we moved into division reserve.

General Palmer rotated back to the States on the 17th of July and Brigadier General Thomas L. Harrold assumed command of the 1st Cavalry.

Four inches of rain fell on July 20, causing severe flooding and some units were cut off by the high water. Men from D Company ate corn and potatoes from the fields of a nearby farm. And we used the water from the flooded river until supplies could reach us. Our unit was able to return to action six days later.

The Division held a ceremony on July 29 to unveil a granite monument that marked the point where the North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel to start the war. It also marked the spot where the 1st Cavalry had crossed the line—for the third time—going into North Korea in May of 1951.

The 7th Cavalry Regiment replaced the 24th Infantry Regiment of the 25th Infantry Division, on the August 1st, completing the division's return to action.

During the month of September we fought on Hills 313 and 418

Operation Commando started on October 3rd on Hills 230, 250, 287, 313, 346, and 418. These were west of Chorwon, North Korea. The 7th Cavalry's 1st BN gained a foothold on Hill 287 on the sixth, and on the seventh we cleared out the entire enemy. On the fifteenth the losses on Hills 199, 200, and 346—Old Baldy—were so heavy in the 1st BN that a third of all rear echelon personnel was put on the front line.

The 1st Cavalry Division received word on the 20th of November that they would be leaving Korea—we were headed for Japan. On December 18th, the 7th Cavalry Regiment left Inchon arriving on the island of Hokkaido, Japan later that month.

I remember getting a pass to go into town on New Years Day—it was twenty-two degrees below zero.

~~Forty-Three~~

Raymond Reilley

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

I come from the small town of Byrnesville, Pennsylvania, which consisted of thirty homes. Due to the underground coal mine fire in Centralia, the town is now gone.

I was inducted into the U.S. Army on January 3, 1951. After arriving at Fort Dix, New Jersey my first order of business was a little white lie. I told them that I was raised by my grandparents, so I received a three day pass to attend my grandfather's funeral. However, upon my return, I found that all my friends had been sent to Virginia and I ended up staying at Fort Dix for my basic training.

When it was time for me to head west—to Korea—I arrived in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania two hours early and had already missed the train. Since this was a troop train, its schedule was never announced. An M.P. was able to get me a seat on a civilian train bound for Chicago. However, when the troop train arrived, I was sitting on some railroad sills waiting for it. Somehow we had passed the troop train along the way.

Arriving in California, we boarded a ship headed for Japan. Fourteen days later we finally docked in Japan, and I must have puked halfway there. From here we sailed overnight to Korea.

Upon arriving in Korea we spent a few days resting, and then we headed north. Even though the train was full of bullet holes, I wasn't afraid. On our way up we picked up a flat car that had a few .50 caliber machine guns on it; we placed this car in front of the train. All the tunnels were guarded on each end, and we were issued real bullets—now I was scared!

I would be assigned to the Medical Company, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, as an ambulance driver—right. I never saw an

ambulance, so I became a battalion aid man.

* * * * *

I was a medic in the fourth platoon and we were attacking a hill. There was an awful lot of shooting and we were told “medics move up front.” I replied that I was with the fourth platoon. I was told, “They don’t need a medic back here. Get your ass up front.” So I did. On the way up I passed a lot of wounded waiting for litter bearers to take them down the hill. A medic asked me if I needed help; he was shot dead, right next to me.

The enemy overran the hill and pushed us back. The wounded that were waiting for the litter bearers soon found their own transportation—they got up and ran. Killed or wounded, we lost 65 percent of our company. When I got back to the aid station, a seriously wounded soldier was crying “The Our Father”; this bothered me for a long time.

We were moved to the rear for a rest and every time we dug a nice foxhole, someone would yell, “Saddle up. We’re moving out.” Boy, did I hear that a lot! Then we were issued shoe polish! Why?

Bob Hope was coming and he always brought girls with him. Guess what? We heard those immortal words, “Saddle up. We’re moving out.”

We were transferred to the Munsani Peace Camp, which is where the peacemakers and their families lived during the negotiations in Panmunjom. Here everything was Pomp and Circumstance. If it didn’t move, you saluted it, painted it, or picked it up. There was a hole in the ground large enough that you could have parked a small truck in it. Even though it was nice and level at the bottom, we were told not to pitch our tent there. We had to set up our tent on the side of the hill. Later that night we would find out why they told us not to pitch our tent in that nice, level hole; it turned into a nice little river.

Of all things, we had reveille. The following morning, two guys didn’t hear it and for their punishment they had to bail out the water in the large hole. We laughed at them with their bucket brigade—it was funny. The next day Fred Stidd, my buddy from Compton, California, and myself missed reveille. You guessed it! Now they got to laugh at us.

Thanksgiving of 1951 was my first Thanksgiving away from home. As the cooks were milling around in the kitchen tent there was a small

explosion from one of the stoves, burning the tent to the ground. Talking about burning the Thanksgiving turkey! So, we were farmed out to other companies. The company we went to had a baker and we had a special treat, a delicious cake.

The 1st Cavalry was going to Japan and to get to go along, one had to have six months in Korea—I just made it. As we were getting ready to move out, we were sent into the hills to look for any enemy hiding there. We didn't find any, but a truck ran away—backwards down the hill—and several GI's were killed. Unfortunately, there's more than one way to be killed in war; and they were so close to leaving this hellhole.

During our five day voyage to Hokkaido, Japan, I puked during four and a half of them. It was a good thing I didn't join the Navy.



Douglas Voss. Photo provided by Douglas Voss



This photo is Tom Enos posing with a statue of Captain Sitter.
Photo was provided by Tom Enos.



Front Row L to R: Charlie Hudson, Joe Barbarese, Bong Cup Chong, _____ Perry

Standing L to R: Tony Faiello, _____ Christopopelus, Joe Ackerman, Lester Hinderman.

This picture was taken at Yungchung, Korea on January 27, 1951. Photo provided by Tony Faiello.

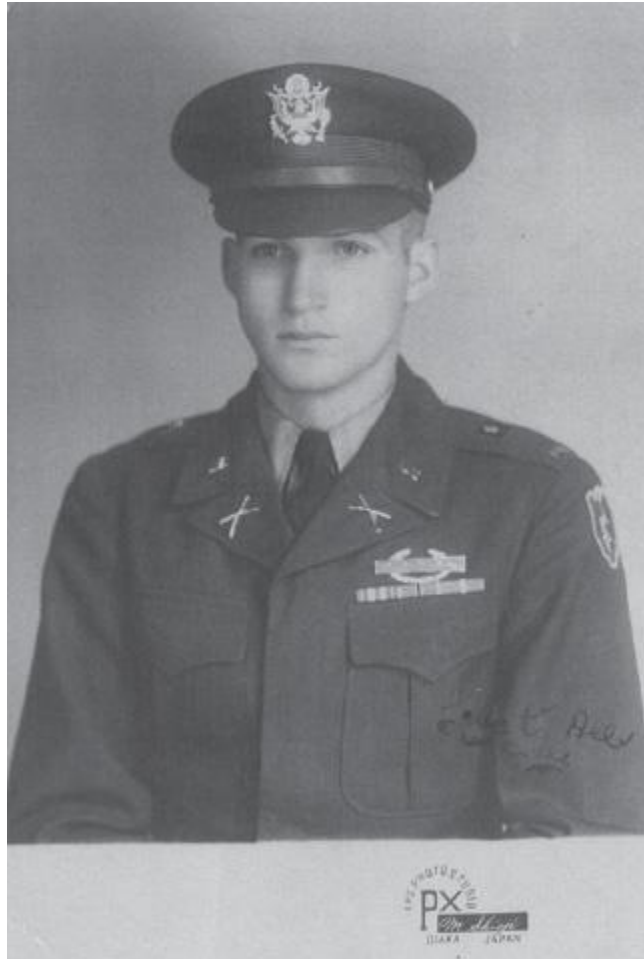


Photo of Joseph Marlett was taken in Osaka, Japan in October 1950, while on R&R. Photo provided by Joseph Marlett.



Ernest Everett Edge. Photo provided by Edge Family.



L to R: Sgt. Marvin Barkley, SFC Delbert Rice, Lt. Norman McLaughlin, Sgt. Lawrence Saunders, SFC Albert Norman, PFC Hugh Hart, and PFC Jesse Adams. Photo provided by Rexford Glass.



Sitting by the mortar tube is Delbert Rice. The other two are unknown. Photo provided by Delbert Rice.



Photo of Howard Camp taken at Camp Haugen, Japan in 1952.
Photo provided by Howard Camp.



L to R: Bill Turner, Ivan D. Brown, and Stanley Grogan. Photo provided by Stanley Grogan.



Raymond Reilley. Photo provided by Raymond Reilley.



Eating his chow is Leroy Rogers. Photo provided by Leroy Rogers.



L to R: George DeSha and John Donohue. Photo provided by George DeSha.



To the far right is Chuck Gibbs. The young girls are from nearby village, looking for food. The temperature was zero when this picture was taken. Photo provided by Chuck Gibbs.



The Marine on the far right, looking at the camera is John Rick Kennedy.
Photo provided by John Rick Kennedy.



Posing with his 57mm recoilless rifle is Clyde Corsaro. Photo provided by Clyde Corsaro.

Book II

July 1951 thru June 1952

~~Forty-Four~~

David Lopez

19th Infantry Regiment

24th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I served in Korea from July 17, 1951 through February of 1952. I was with George Company, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. As a member of the second squad, second platoon, I carried a BAR, which is an automatic rifle that has three speeds. It is also capable of shooting faster than the .30 caliber machine gun. And since it only weighs nineteen pounds, it is easier to maneuver in and out of tight spots.

* * * * *

There are many stories of my days in Korea, but this is the one I remember the most vividly because I was wounded.

We were located on a mountain that we had fought for, and had been holding for thirty days. On September 11, 1951 we were relieved and moved to the rear area. Here we were able to take hot showers, get a clean change of clothes, but the best of all—we ate hot meals.

On the 14th of September, two tanks moved up close to my position. They began to fire at some bunkers that were located on the hill in front of us. The enemy had moved in a cannon, and after each tank had fired six rounds apiece; the cannon fired back. Suddenly, I heard a bang, but the shell went by me so fast I didn't have time to yell, "Incoming." Shortly after this, the tanks pulled back. This was the first time I had seen tanks in action, because my war had been fought from mountain to mountain.

We were told to clean and oil our weapons, because the next morning we would be going back into action. Up by 6:00 AM, breakfast by 7:00 AM, we started crossing a river that was thirty yards wide, and, in spots, chest high. If you looked to the right, then left, you would have thought the

entire division was on the move; which was good, because your chance of getting hit in such a large group drops was less. We couldn't move very fast, and we could see bullets hitting all around us.

Each squad usually had one or two Korean boys they used to wash clothes, carry ammo, or other odd chores. Our Korean boy, who looked to be about twelve years old, was hit. The bullet entered his mouth and came out his left cheek.

Finally, we made it across and then we were at the bottom of a cliff. The second platoon quickly set up. We had one .30 caliber machine gun and three BAR's—I was to the right of the machine gun. The first and third platoons passed through us as they went on attack, and we immediately fired for support. Our machine gunner was hit by enemy fire and his body was quickly moved out of the way and a replacement took over. As I fired my BAR, I tried not to give the enemy too much of a target to shoot at. My assistant, Benny, was behind me reloading the magazines when he was hit in the elbow.

After a while, we too began to move up so we could continue to provide supporting fire to the advancing platoons. We came to a place where the trail looked like an upside down question mark. From there, I had a good view of the enemy, and I opened up on them. I also noticed they were going down the backside of the hill, heading towards a certain point; the exact same spot our platoons were headed.

The action had been going on for close to an hour, as the enemy and our platoons were getting close to the spot on the trail. As the firing intensified, some of the men began to break. If some broke, this meant the rest would usually follow. Sure enough, they all came running by my position. To give you an idea how scared a person can become while bugging out; there was a BAR man from one of the platoons yelling to put a BAR on the flanks. He was correct, but he had a BAR in his hand as he kept on running.

I continued to cover the retreating platoons until everyone was back. Word soon came down for the second platoon to continue the attack, and to take the hill. We started up the hill, with the enemy firing at us, until we reached the location that the other platoons made it to. The intense shooting lasted from forty-five to sixty minutes, and we only had one guy to crack.

After all was done, we had taken the hill—but at a cost. Out of thirty-seven men, in our platoon, we were down to a rifle squad. We had three killed in action, and nineteen wounded—including myself.

I had set up close to two bodies from the other platoons when I noticed that one of them had his finger cut off; an enemy soldier had taken his wedding ring.

Of the enemy, we counted at least thirty dead, and there was blood everywhere. I checked my ammo and I must have fired over five-hundred rounds, but to tell the truth I cannot say if I killed any enemy soldiers for we were all firing. Have you ever seen ants when they run away? That's how it looked. When my final day on earth comes and I meet my maker, He will tell me who killed who. Having fired that much ammo, I am sure I will share the responsibility with the rest of the platoon.

On the 16th of September, I had my wounds treated at the aid station. As I walked the trail back, I came across four wounded North Korean soldiers. They asked me for some water, which I gave them; however, they emptied my canteen. I went back to the aid station to inform them of the four North Korean soldiers, and to get more water. As I went back up the trail, they again asked me for some water, which this time I refused because water was hard to come by.

As we continued to move up, we soon found out why the enemy wasn't running out of soldiers. They had escape routes dug through the hillside. This was also how they managed to get their cannon up there.

Two weeks later, as we were coming down the hill someone started firing at us. Needless to say, we returned the fire. As we continued, we came face-to-face with those four wounded North Korean soldiers—this time they were dead.

~~Forty-Five~~

Charles Bracey

61st FA BN

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

Growing up in Johns, North Carolina, I was drafted in March of 1951 at the age of twenty.

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In early July, after arriving in Korea, I was assigned to the HQ Battery of the 61st FA; my twin brother, Neill, was also attached to this unit. The first week there, we were in reserve and the Canadians were located next to us. Suddenly, I heard a loud explosion and immediately turned around to see two guys flying through the air; they had hit a land mine. One was killed instantly, and the other had the meat ripped from his legs. I was close enough to hear him tell the medics, "Tell my wife I'll see her in hell." From that point forward, I was afraid of stepping on a mine.

* * * * *

During September we had taken another hill, and I was walking on the ridge line when I heard a voice say, "Hey fool, get off that ridge line, there's a sniper on that next hill." I quickly got down, hooked into the commo line, and took off running down the hill. The area had not been cleared of mines and as I briskly moved down the hill, I worried about stepping on one.

* * * * *

We had a crew chief, George Best, from Ohio who liked to play practical jokes. There were three new replacements assigned to our unit, and George had warned them about incoming shells and the sound they made. He whistled just like an incoming shell and everyone dove off the

three-quarter ton truck. He started laughing, and as soon as they got back on the truck, real shells—white phosphorus ones—started coming in. These would burn a hole in you, if they hit you. As the shell hit between me and the truck; George yelled, “Charlie, we’ll see you on the other side of the hill.” I probably set a world speed record getting out of there.

The shells were getting closer and I had about a six-hundred yard sprint to be on the back side of the hill. As I was running, suddenly a pheasant flew up in front of me and I thought I had stepped on a mine. It scared me so bad I about lost everything. Finally, the shelling stopped and I caught up with the rest of the crew; we then high-tailed it out of there.

* * * * *

Our unit was the lead artillery battalion; we had control over eleven battalions, which fired constantly for several days to soften up “Old Baldy.” The fire control section—the ones that called in artillery fire—was under the command of the 61st. As you can imagine, it was hard to get any sleep under these conditions.

My crew was dispatched to set up communication lines between the artillery forward observers and the liaison section, which was just behind the front lines. We had to climb up a steep hill, then down the backside. On our way up we noticed a small cave near the top. I approached the cave and at the last minute decided not to go in it, but to continue on. Due to the hard climb, we left our weapons in our vehicle with the driver—a mistake.

Unknown to us, there were six guerrillas hiding in that cave; apparently their mission was to blow-up our ammo dump. After we passed the cave, they came out and headed down the hill. Upon completing our mission, we were going back when we heard a lot of shooting. When we reached the bottom, there laid five dead North Koreans; four had been shot between the eyes and the fifth one through the heart.

Our driver was a new replacement from Tennessee. As the North Koreans were coming down the hill they noticed him and began shooting. So, he rolled to the ground and returned fire. He told me that he was a hillbilly from Tennessee and had hunted all his life. Luckily, he still had the M-1 rifle instead of the carbine that was normally issued to new

replacements. I have always regretted that I never learned his name. I understand that he was awarded the Silver Star for his actions.

After the battle was over, and the 7th Cavalry had taken the hill, my CO called me in and asked me to pick a guy to go with me to return the radios back to the other artillery batteries that had supported us. I chose Sgt. Joseph Noe—a great guy. We were given a map with the unit locations marked on it, and a compass.

Since it was going to be a several day trip, we loaded several C-rations in our vehicle. The temperature was dipping down to zero—or lower—at nights, so we took three blankets with us. On our first day out, we came to a bombed out village where we stopped. We hid behind a wall to protect us from being shot at by a sniper. As we opened our first can of rations, about ten Korean kids, hungry and wearing very few clothes, came out from behind the wall—what a pitiful sight. I looked at Joe and said, “Man! I can’t eat looking at these starving kids.” He replied that he wasn’t able to eat either. So, we opened up our rations and fed them. Luckily, the oldest one knew enough English to understand what we were saying. We also gave them our blankets, telling them to huddle together so they would stay warm. And we told them we would get them some help.

The next unit we came to, we informed the CO about these kids. He called headquarters, which said they would send someone to pick them up. To this day I can still see their faces and am reminded of them every time I see and ad for “Save the Children.”

* * * * *

In December of 1951, we were placed in reserve as we waited to move to Japan. It was extremely cold and snowing like crazy. We were living in large tents that held thirty-to-forty men. Some of the guys had visited the British and Greeks, and bought fifths of liquor for twenty dollars a fifth. Needless to say, they “tied one on.” Some completely passed out. After all, we only had one beer ration the whole time we were in Korea.

My crew was on alert status, and as luck would have it, the Chinese had broken through the ROK and we had to fire support for the infantry unit that was backing up the ROK unit. So, my crew and I set up the necessary lines running from the artillery to the liaison section. When we returned to

camp, some time after midnight, we found that one side of our tent had collapsed from the snow. So, we had to pull the guys out from underneath the tent. One guy, Homer Harding, had zipped up his sleeping bag and was unable to get out. Using his knife, he had to cut his way out. When we finally got him out, he looked like he had been “tarred and feathered.” Naturally, we kidded all the guys who had to stay behind with their tremendous hangovers.

We were one of the last 1st Cavalry units to leave Korea; the 1st was being replaced by the 45th Infantry Division. We envisioned going to a warmer place, but we ended up in Hokkaido, Japan, which was colder than Korea.

The day before we were to board the train, we had heard rumors of riding on steam heated cars. When we arrived at the station, they put us in regular boxcars; it was twenty-five degrees below zero. We left at 7:30 AM arriving in Inchon after 10:00 PM. Luckily, we had taken our blankets out of our duffel bags, wrapping up in them. One guy took a candle and held it close to his feet, because they were so cold; he burned the soles of his feet. After unloading from the train, we had to stand in the bitter cold for thirty minutes. Then we boarded a troopship that was at least sixty-five degrees; guys started passing out like flies.

For the first time in six months, I slept like a baby.

~~Forty-Six~~

Albert Field

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On March 29, 1951, I received a free bus ride from San Bernardino, California to Fort Ord, California, where I went through fourteen weeks of basic training—in the U.S. Army.

I was no stranger to Army life; my father retired from the Army in 1943. So, I spent my first thirteen years on army bases. I was familiar with army personnel, the barracks, and the mess halls; I even knew how to march. However, basic training was different.

After our arrival at Fort Ord, we went to the reception center where we traded our civilian clothes for GI clothes. One morning we were told to pack our duffel bags and proceed to the front of the barracks. From there we walked to a parking lot and tossed our bags into a waiting truck. We were then told to get in formation, and then we met a new group of instructors.

I stood there chewing my gum as I watched what was going on around me. Suddenly, a guy appeared in front of me; I soon learned his name—Sgt. Morimoto. He asked me what was in my mouth.

I responded, “Gum.”

He informed me to get rid of it. Knowing better than to spit it on the ground, I put it in my pocket.

The sarge must have been satisfied, because in a calm voice he told me to give him twenty-five. To which I replied, “Twenty-five what?”

In a louder voice, he said, “Twenty-five push-ups!”

I figured I was the only one counting, so after doing twenty-three, I stood up. In a louder voice, he asked me who said I could get up. Then in

even a louder voice, he told me to give him twenty-five more. This time he told me to “sound-off.” After finishing, I waited for permission to stand.

That was the first—and last—time that I got chewed out or did push-ups for punishment.

Finally, during the first week of July, my fourteen weeks of basic training were over. I received a short leave, to go home, before my new assignment—Korea.

* * * * *

When it came time for me to leave home I searched through the house for mother, finding her sitting on the edge of her bed. She took my hand as we sat there without saying a word; she with tears in her eyes. In a little while, she turned loose of my hand, gave me a kiss, and told me to go.

It was a goodbye I have never forgotten.

* * * * *

My stay at Camp Stoneman, California, was for two days, and then I boarded a four-engine, twin-tailed, Constellation headed for Hawaii. What was to be a two hour stop, before going on to Wake Island, turned in to ten hours due to an engine needing repaired.

After a brief stay on Wake, we landed in Yokohama, Japan; the hottest, and most humid, place I had ever been. We were issued new clothes and boots, then off to Korea we went.

After landing in Korea, we loaded onto a deuce-and-a-half and headed north. As we drove through Seoul, I could not believe the destruction; people with all they possessed on their backs; children, hungry and begging for food. A sad sight!

We spent the night at a replacement center, where we received a haircut and turned in the clothes we would no longer need. Now everything I possessed I carried on my back, like the civilians I had seen in Seoul. Along with my M-1 rifle, ammo belt, trenching tool, canteen, and First-Aid Kit; I was ready for the front line. However, my training did not prepare me for the drastic change that was to take place in my life in the next few days.

As we crossed the 38th parallel, we went through a huge barbed wire complex known as the Kansas Line; which was loaded with minefields. When night came the ground would become our bed. The following morning, we continued our journey north. We passed through an artillery section that was firing continuously on a big hill to their north. As I stood there watching the shells rip apart the mountain, my only thought was, "Why?" The following morning, I found out the answer.

Around noon our journey came to an end. We were dropped off in a little canyon, with nothing around us except five-or-six more new replacements. Here we were welcomed to Company M, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, by Captain Corbin. You never volunteered for anything in the service; however, this doesn't always hold true. The captain asked if any of us had experience in cooking, typing, 81mm mortars, etc... These were probably some of the better positions in the company. So, I stood there without raising my hand; I guess I was waiting for something better. Then he turned to those of us who didn't raise our hands, and said you are machine gunners and will be assigned to K Company.

A machine gun section consists of two squads, each with a .30 caliber water-cooled machine gun. The gunner carried the tripod, which weighed about forty-four pounds. The gun, which weighed about the same as the tripod was carried by the assistant gunner. Ammo bearers carried two cans of ammo, each weighing fifteen pounds; there were two-hundred fifty rounds per can.

I was taken by jeep, just a short distance down the road. Then the driver stopped and pointed to a small group of guys gathered on a small rise, off in the distance. He went on to tell me that was my machine gun section. I got out of the jeep, gathered my gear, and then the jeep sped off leaving me in a cloud of dust.

Finally, I made my way to the small rise, where the group of twenty-one guys were located. One was from Guatemala and the other twenty were from all parts of the United States. Six of them had been in Korea for about two months; the rest were almost as new as I was. I was assigned to help carry ammo for the two .30 caliber machine guns. As I was being introduced, there were a couple of guys that really stood out. I could tell they were the ones I needed to stay close to; one was Carl Myers.

They told us after K Company ate their chow that night, we would meet with them to get oriented about Hill 487. This was the hill the artillery section was continuously shelling. From all observations, there was nothing moving on that hill.

We were taken by trucks as far as possible, and then hiked to the base of the hill. From the base we were to climb to the top, string barbed wire, and set up a defensive position. After this had been completed, another unit would relieve us and we would be back by nightfall for a hot meal.

It was dark when we reached the end of the road, and disembarked from the trucks. Then we began a night march, back to the hill. The night was so long, we took three rest stops. When dawn arrived, we were on a long ridge looking up at this huge mountain.

Stopping at the base we were told to dig in, which was routine. Carl and myself dug a foxhole together. When we finished, we laid down in it and ate a can of cold beans. Soon, word was passed around that in a short time we would continue our climb up the hill. However, before we started, they told us to fire some practice rounds off to our side, which we did. What a mistake! It was like walking up to a door and ringing the doorbell—announcing “we’re here.”

As the riflemen jumped off their assault, I gave my cans of ammo to the machine gunner; who was providing overhead fire to the riflemen. I stood there wondering why there was all this shooting, when there was no one on the hill. Suddenly, a guy to my left yelled for me to get down; he didn’t have to tell me twice. It seemed someone forgot to tell the “Chinks” they weren’t supposed to be there—at least not according to our plan.

This area was rockier than where Carl and I had dug our hole. So, as I moved the rocks to make me a hole, I put them in front of me for protection from the bullets that were hitting all around us. Kneeling on my knees, I raised up to look around. This almost proved to be a fatal mistake, as I felt the heat from a bullet as it whizzed by my ear.

Suddenly, I noticed a guy lying about ten feet in front of me, unconscious, with a long gash along the side of his head. A medic picked him up and carried him off. By now everyone was running back to the rear. The only thought that came to my mind was, we are all going to get shot in the back.

In just a short distance that thought became reality. There, lying on the trail in front of me was a GI that had been shot in his back. I soon came upon four guys carrying a wounded soldier; he looked a lot like the guy I had seen earlier with the head wound. They were exhausted and asking for help, but no one stopped. I would have rather been running like the other guys, but I stopped. I told one of the guys to carry my rifle while I took his place. When we reached safety, I was unable to find the GI with my rifle. However, many guys were carrying someone else's rifle due to the high number of casualties; so, I took one of those.

We were soon being regrouped and I had this feeling in my stomach that we would be going up that hill again. Then orders came down; move out. It was decided that we would take the easiest, and quickest, way out, since we were tired and had many wounded.

As we walked down into a valley, we came upon a large rice paddy. The water was about waist high, and it was like wading through a sewer pond; the Koreans used human waste as fertilizer. We finally reached the area where the trucks were to pick us up. Totally exhausted, there was little to no conversation on the trucks. We didn't return to the area we started from, nor did we have a hot meal waiting for us—nobody cared. We all laid down on the ground, and slept until morning.

* * * * *

We reached our objective, which was an observation post where we stayed for ten days. Our second morning here, we learned we would also be a patrol base; this wasn't good news. This meant patrols would go out to locate, and see what the enemy was doing. Then we would return to base, hopefully without any casualties. When going on these patrols we never took our machine guns, so now I didn't have to carry the thirty pounds of ammo.

There was one hill that we went out on patrol on that looked like it had been fought over, won and lost numerous times; it had the scars to prove it. We all dispersed into the trenches that already lined the hillside. Half of the guys slept, while the other half pulled watch. We had no blankets, so I pulled my poncho over my head in an effort to stay warm. It was a long, miserable night; luckily for us, we saw no Chinese.

The next morning we headed back to base. Along the way, we came upon a creek where the water was clear. We stopped, filled our canteens, and laid down in the creek—clothes and all. This was the closest thing we had to a bath in about a week. My boots soon filled with water, which was soothing to the sores on my feet. We arrived at our base late in the afternoon, tired, but alive. The only thing that was bleeding was my feet. Since we never went out on another patrol, they had time to heal.

They told us that the next day K Company would be bringing us up hot meals, which would be my first since leaving Seoul. However, the machine gun squads were from M Company; we soon found out how it felt to be an orphan. After much debate over who was responsible for feeding us, K Company said they would—we ate last.

* * * * *

At the break of dawn on September 21, 1951, we headed for Hill 339. We now had ten guys to do what twenty-two did when I first arrived. Once again, we teamed up with K Company as we started our climb up a steep embankment. After reaching the top, it was back to the normal routine of Korea—up one hill, down another. Along the way, we took several short breaks. With two legs of the tripod slung over your shoulders, and the third rubbing the middle of your back, you tried to conserve your strength.

We came to a fork in the trail and we took the one to the right. Traveling only a short distance, we came upon a GI lying on a stretcher—stiff as a board. Continuing on, we soon realized we had taken the wrong trail. So, we turned around and headed back; once again we passed the dead soldier. These are the things one doesn't forget.

Finally, around mid-afternoon we set up our gun at the end of a ridge that overlooked our objective. A lieutenant from K Company set up a telescope and as he was looking at the hill we were to take, he noticed movement. Being too far away to identify them as friend or foe, he asked me to look. I agreed with him, we were too far away to make a positive identification; but, I guessed them to be GI's. He guessed the same, because another company was to come up the hill from the other side.

Having confirmed by radio that the hill was unoccupied, taking Hill 339 would proceed. As we went down off the ridge, and approached the

base of the hill, all hell broke loose. Mortar rounds came down on us like a hailstorm. With nothing to shield us, we quickly jumped to the low side of the hill and laid as flat as we could. Finally, the shelling stopped, so we grabbed our gear and up the hill we went. Carrying the tripod, I made it half the way up before my legs wouldn't go anymore. The mortar shells began to fall again, so I yelled for Carl to get the tripod off my back. He did, and I was able to make it to the top.

Reaching the top, we set up our machine gun in a shell hole that was roughly five-to-six feet across. It wasn't the greatest place to set up, but for the time being it would have to do. There were trenches, and bunkers, already on the hill since it had been occupied earlier. With darkness approaching, I found a shell hole about five feet across, but not very deep. It was in an area that needed to be defended, so I took first watch. I told my assistant gunner, Higgins, to stay with Carl and Chief, and try to get some sleep—since he would be relieving me.

As I sat there alone in the dark, shivering from the cold and shaking from fear, my mind began to race. With no one to talk to, I looked to the heavens. Suddenly, it didn't seem to be as dark. I had no religious training, but I remember mother telling me the Bible was a sacred book. And there was a God who would look after us. So, I began to talk to Him; telling Him how I felt. When I finished I was no longer cold, and had become calm.

Higgins had joined me for the rest of the night, when just before midnight the night came alive with the clatter of machine gun fire from K Company. Even though it didn't last long, it definitely kept us on our toes. The next morning we found out that the Chinese had sent out a patrol to see if we were alert; it cost them several men.

That same morning we found another shell hole further up the hill, which was a better place to set up our machine gun. It was hard rock and the shell didn't penetrate very deep, so we had to dig. We ended up with a hole big enough for two guys to squeeze into, and we stacked rocks along the sides. Then we covered the top with branches and dirt. It wouldn't stop a mortar shell, but at least our position was concealed. Swede and Chyzy set up in a bunker about thirty feet to our left. Carl and "Chief" (William Whistler) were down the hill a little and to our left.

To this day, I still remember what Swede told me on that day as I set up my machine gun.

He said, “Don’t worry; I’ll be right here if you need me.”

Our right side was open, and K Company was above us—on the other side of the hill. We had heard that the Chinese had caught Charlie Company while many of them were asleep in their bags. Carl and I didn’t want this happening to us, so we devised a way to communicate with each other. We strung communication wire between our positions, and tied empty C-ration cans to each end. To get each others attention, we pulled on the wire; then to communicate we made short jerks on the wire.

A few days later, we finally got some protection on our right when men from K Company put up some barbed wire. They also put in some trip flares, which we were unaware of.

Having been here for several days, we were taking casualties every day. One afternoon we received a lot of mortar fire, and then it finally stopped. So, I decided to take a break and walk to the backside of the hill. I came upon a trench that I had taken shelter in on the first day we arrived. As I looked down, there were two almost decapitated GI’s—it was a terrible sight. They were two medics who had apparently laid down to rest and had put their stretchers over the top to shield themselves from the sun. The trench had taken a direct hit from a mortar shell.

This one particular night started like all the rest, one hour on and one off with heavy mortar bombardment. Then shortly before midnight, as I was looking forward to my hour rest, the shelling stopped. Suddenly, the hillside came to life with what sounded like a thousand pair of feet charging up the hill. Quickly, I jerked my C-ration can to warn Carl; he too, was warning me. Then came those blood curdling screams, which sent cold chills up my spine. I pulled back the bolt on my gun, and squeezed the trigger.

I was very thankful for the barbed wire and trip flares that K Company had placed on my right. The flares lit up the area, catching eight-or-ten Chinese in its light. I watched as the red tracer bullets, from my gun, caused them to fall out of sight. As I fired in the direction of the screaming, I soon went through the first can of ammo. As Higgins was putting the second ammo box on the gun, he said, “You are shooting to fast!” And I was. I had

just recently learned that Higgins was only fifteen. How he was able to enlist was beyond me.

After he finished putting the cover back down, I pulled back the bolt to resume firing; I pulled the trigger and it only fired one round. Panic began to race through me as I pulled back the bolt and it only fired one shot again. The only thing I had left to fight with was my .45 pistol, with only twenty rounds of ammo.

Higgins lifted the cover to find the belt had twisted. Once again I pulled back the bolt, and this time we were back in business. During the third or fourth ammo box the gun become really hot and with the water running low, steam began to come out the barrel. What little water we had left in our canteens was poured into the gun. We needed more! So, we both urinated in a C-ration can and poured it in the gun.

Due to our hole being small, we couldn't store our six boxes of ammo in it. With only enough room for four, we stored the other two in a shell hole that was about ten feet away. Now we needed those two boxes. I told Higgins to man the gun while I went for the ammo.

I let Carl know what I was doing, for we were to shoot anything that moved, or stood up. He informed me that he had run out of ammo for his carbine, and he wanted me to throw him the M-1 that was stored in the hole with our boxes of ammo. I tossed the M-1 where I thought Carl was located, but I guess he wasn't able to find it in the dark. Then I quickly grabbed the ammo boxes and went back to my machine gun.

Soon, the unnerving screams stopped; we could hear the Chinese falling back. Now we could hear the moans of their wounded as they were being taken care of by their medics. Higgins wanted to keep firing, but they were withdrawing and we were running low on ammo. So, we stopped shooting.

I believe it was around 3:00 AM when a sergeant from K Company came by and told us to bring our gun up the hill so we could form a tighter perimeter. There was a crater, about eight feet across, on top of the hill; this is where we set up our gun. Joining the Sarge, Higgins, and myself in the hole were Carl and Chief.

The first thing we wanted to know about was how were "Pete" (Clayton Peterson) and the guys on the other gun. We knew they never fired

a shot, so we could only think the worse. I told Carl we needed to say a prayer for them, so we did. Suddenly, we heard someone say, “Hey you guys.” My first reaction was to go help him, but the sergeant said it could be a trap. Even though I was out voted, I called for Pete. We waited and listened; finally, he reached our position. He had been shot in the leg, mid-way above the knee. I took a bandage from my First Aid Kit and wrapped his leg; Carl took him to a bunker on the backside of the hill.

We found out that Werney, our squad leader, Swede, and Chyzy were all around the back in a bunker. Swede had been shot in both knees.

When daylight arrived, medics began to attend to the wounded. Men began to move around and survey the damage. Some guys had cameras and they took pictures of the dead. Lt. Hughes, of K Company, also came to our side of the hill to survey the results of the night. He told me that he was requesting for us to be relieved by Item Company.

I heard that some Korean civilians would be carrying our wounded off the hill, so I went to say goodbye to them. I found Pete, and we talked for a moment; then I went to see Swede. He was lying on a stretcher waiting to be carried off the hill, I could see he was in a lot of pain—neither of us said a word.

I returned to our position, hoping we would be relieved soon. Apparently, the Chinese had regrouped, because heavy mortar shelling started again. As I listened to the incoming rounds, I could tell they were getting closer. Then all the sudden, five rounds were coming my way and it was too late for me to run. All I could do was curl up in a ball and count as they exploded. I knew the last one was going to get me, but it landed several feet away. As soon as the dust settled, I took off running to Carl’s hole.

Finally, around mid-day, we were relieved by Item Company. We moved around to the back of the hill and down to the bottom of a valley. We continued our normal one hour on and one off guard duty. Shortly before midnight someone fired a few rounds; then more guys began firing. Higgins pulled back the bolt and was ready to fire, when I told him not to shoot. We waited, and it soon calmed down. Considering what we had gone through the night before, everyone was on edge—and a little trigger happy.

The following day, we were able to take turns going down the hill for hot showers, a change of clothes, and even a hot meal. After taking my shower, I hopped a ride in a jeep to go get my hot meal. When I arrived the cook informed me I was too late. Even after explaining to him our circumstances, I still didn't get a hot meal.

After returning to my outfit, Higgins and I decided to clean, and oil, our gun. While cleaning it we discovered a spring that had broken on one side. We dispatched word back to supply that we needed a new spring. When we finished cleaning and oiling it we put it back together, hoping if we needed to use it that it would still work.

As nightfall was approaching, our new spring arrived. I thought about waiting until morning to change it, but I changed my mind. I should have taken the gun outside since there wasn't much room in our bunker, but I didn't. When I reached over to take out the bolt, the driving rod shot out like a bullet, lodging in the lower part of my left eye—near my nose. The first thought that crossed my mind was, I lost my eye. This meant I would be going home, but blind in one eye. However, I guess being alive and blind in one eye was better then the alternative.

I tried to pull it out, but it wouldn't budge. Carl ran over to me, looked at the rod sticking out of my face and told me to pull it out. I told him I had already tried, so this time I used both hands pulling as hard as I could. Finally, I felt a pop and out it came. I was accompanied back to our company, where I was put on a litter jeep and taken to a medical facility. Here they covered both my eyes with a bandage, placed my personal belongings in a bag, and loaded me on a bus that ran on the railroad tracks.

The guys driving the bus were having a difficult time keeping it on the tracks. They were constantly stopping and I could hear them working to get the wheels back on the tracks. Finally, we reached the end of the line, and I was loaded into an ambulance—if that's what you want to call it. It looked like a panel truck with a stretcher in it. Arriving at a hospital in Seoul, they carried me in and sat my stretcher down, and said goodbye. From the echo of their footsteps, it appeared to be a large building.

The following morning I was taken to a room where a young doctor informed me that I would be his first operation that month; putting in

stitches was considered an operation. When he finished sewing me up, they took me to my bed and I was allowed to take a shower.

After spending a few days here, the doctor removed the stitches and said that I could return to my unit. Going through the replacement center, I received a new issue of combat gear; including a new rifle. The next morning I hitched a ride on the back of a truck headed toward the front line. When I reached M Company, I still knew a few of the guys and they were surprised to see me. They just knew I had lost my eye, and was on my way home.

A day or two later, our machine gun section was taken to the company area for showers, hot meals, and a much needed rest. Now that we didn't have to worry about mortar and artillery fire, we were allowed to pitch pup tents—Carl and I shared one.

We took turns pulling guard during the night and I could hardly see with my bad eye—I was practically blind at night. A few nights later, while we had gathered in one of the big tents, the order to “saddle-up” came down. As I began to gather my gear, I was told I couldn't go because of my eye. So, I stayed behind and helped anyway I could. The rest of my time in Korea, I spent giving haircuts, worked as a switchboard operator, along with anything else that needed to be done.

Around the middle of November we moved to a safe area where we stayed until the first of December. Then the entire 1st Cavalry Division was shipped to Japan; we were replaced by the 45th Infantry Division.

We stayed at Camp Crawford until the first of December 1952, and then we went back to Korea. After we unloaded at Pusan, we boarded LST's that took us to Koje-do Island.

* * * * *

Finally, March arrived and so did the ship that began my journey home.

~~Forty-Seven~~

Kenneth Flynn

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

I was born on June 23, 1933, in Brooklyn, New York, to John and Catherine Flynn. Three weeks after my seventeenth birthday—on July 18, 1950—I enlisted in the Army.

I was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey for my basic training. Upon my arrival, it looked as though the barracks had not been cleaned since the end of the Second World War. As we new recruits entered, there were newspapers scattered all over the place; they were all dated 1945. Our first order of business was to get the barracks back into living conditions.

Our training consisted of marching, long hikes, stripping and cleaning our weapons, bivouacking, and how to survive under extreme conditions. During basic, the Airborne Division visited our company to recruit new members. They used the incentive that whoever volunteered would no longer have to clean the cosmoline off the new machine guns, which was a messy job. So, some of my buddies and I signed up. However, when it was time to leave, I was in the hospital with pneumonia. Before leaving, my buddies came by to say their goodbyes, along with a case of beer. Later I would find out that they were all injured, or killed, during their training.

After completion of boot camp, I was assigned to a Quartermaster Company there at Fort Dix; this was a sweet deal. I volunteered for permanent KP duty, which was seventy-two hours on and forty-eight off. So, every three days I went home to Brooklyn. However, being the wise guy I was, I stretched a ten day leave out of a three day pass, and the 4th of July; I was gone most of July. When I returned to camp, the first sergeant called me into his office and chewed me out. He told me to check the bulletin board the following day; sure enough, there was my name—I was

headed for Korea. Shortly afterwards, I was on a troop-train headed for San Francisco.

My Uncle Danny had been in the Navy during the Second World War, and he gave me some tips about being seasick. He said regardless of how sick you get, always force yourself to eat. This would help settle your stomach, plus if you did throw-up, it would keep you from getting the dry heaves. His advice came in handy, because for three days we chased our own wake in a typhoon.

After a short, unscheduled stop in Okinawa, where they removed the captain, we finally arrived in Korea; it was August 1951. Rumor had it, that the captain had freaked out during the typhoon and some of the junior officers had to take over the ship.

I was in a group of sixteen guys that were to be assigned to Quartermaster Companies; therefore we had not been issued weapons. However, having been in some heavy fighting, the 1st Cavalry was in dire need of replacements. So fifteen of us were issued M-1 rifles, loaded into trucks and, in the blackness of night, were hastily driven to the front lines. Here I was assigned to the second platoon of Fox Company, 7th Cavalry Regiment.

I was then—in the darkest of night—taken up a hill to a forward position and assigned to a foxhole, which was to be shared with a veteran soldier. The first words he spoke to me were, “Thank God. Maybe now I can get some sleep. The ‘gooks’ have been hitting us every night for the last three days.” I told him to point me in the right direction, and then asked him what I should be listening for. This he did, then he told me to wake him if I heard any noise at all; he then crawled into his sleeping bag.

I thought it would be best if I loaded my M-1, but it had been over a year since I last touched one. Between the dark, the cold, and being scared to death, I forgot how to load the ammo clip. My foxhole buddy heard me fumbling with the clip and asked me what was going on. When I told him, he had some choice words about me, the Army, the damn war, and how it was being run. Needless to say, he didn’t get any sleep that night. And lucky for me the “gooks” didn’t attack or I would have had to use my rifle like a Louisville Slugger. The following day I received a refresher course on the loading of the M-1.

A few nights later, in the same foxhole with a loaded M-1, it was my two hours on while my buddy got some shut-eye. It was another dark filled night, when I heard a scuffling sound, which seemed to be getting closer. I woke up my buddy and told him to be very quiet, and listen. He did, and we both agreed something was in the gorge below our hole. Not to give away our position, orders were not to shoot at night. So, I grabbed a grenade and tried to pull the pin, which would not come out. After my buddy tried and failed, I grabbed another one—with the same results. I signaled to him that if he couldn't get the pin loose—orders or no orders—I was going to shoot. Finally, he was able to pull the pin and rolled it down the hill. Needless to say, after the grenade went off, the whole line went on the alert. We didn't know what was making the noise, but for the rest of the night it was quiet. The next morning, we went down to the gorge to see if we could find out what had made that noise. We found a bloody fur hat, with ear flaps, that belonged to a “gook” about fifteen feet from our hole; so, I guess we did the right thing.

The Army was involved in an operation, which I believe was called Operation Clobber. Tanks and half-tracks were lined up along the entire front line—alongside our foxhole—and for seventy-two straight hours, fired at enemy positions. The noises, and fumes, were unbelievable! After the shelling stopped, we attacked the hills with little opposition. We found that the shelling did very little damage to their well built bunkers, which were located on the back slopes of the hills. The following day, we left giving the enemy back their caves.

My squad was to go on a patrol, but first we had to go through our own minefield. When we asked for a map of the minefield, we were told that it was missing. We protested, but our new “ninety-day wonder” (OCS Lieutenant) ordered us to proceed. Our sergeant led the way, with me—the assistant squad leader—bringing up the rear. About half the way through, the sergeant stepped on a mine, which blew off his foot. I was able to get the rest of the squad out by backtracking over our footsteps; then another soldier and myself went back to get the sergeant. After we successfully retrieved him, and he was on his way to the aid station, I became very angry. I grabbed my M-1 and went looking for the lieutenant. Another sergeant saw me, grabbed me, threw me into a bunker, and calmed me

down before I did something stupid. A few nights later the lieutenant accidentally—so he claimed—shot himself in the hand with his .45 pistol.

It was Thanksgiving 1951 and we rotated in small groups to go down the hill for our Thanksgiving Dinner. Our meal consisted of hot turkey, and all the trimmings, which the newspapers back home were reporting. What they forgot to tell was that it was raining by the buckets, and we only had half a mess gear to put our food in. Standing in line, in the pouring rain, we entered the mess tent to receive our meal. First they placed the turkey, then the mashed potatoes followed by cranberries, vegetables, bread, butter, gravy, pie, and finally the ice-cream—all in a pile. Then we went outside into the pouring rain; our nice meal turned into one big pile of mush. When I saw what was happening, I noticed a lid for one of the big pots that I took and washed off in the rain. As it came my turn in line, I had the cooks place each item in a different spot—on the clean lid—not in a big pile. I then went outside and found a small overhang, under which I ate my Thanksgiving Dinner in relative comfort.

We were on patrol one night, with the intention of surprising a “gook” patrol, and taking a prisoner. Just as we were to leave, the powers to be had a brilliant idea; to put fluorescent sticks on our backs so we could keep track of each other in the dark. As soon as we cleared our lines, we ripped these off each others backs. It was a good thing we did, because the “gooks” were lying in ambush and they opened fire on us. We had taken several casualties before being given the order to pull back; gathering our equipment, we ran back to our line. In the process I ran off a small cliff, and just like in the cartoons, my feet were still running in mid-air. Landing on my feet, I fell backwards and quickly got up and made it back to safety. I laid down to catch my breath, and soon realized I couldn’t move either leg without severe pain. I was evacuated to a M.A.S.H. unit where they took a x-ray of my back and found two fractured vertebrae. From there I was flown to Tokyo Army Hospital.

My combat days had come to an end; even though I would go back to Korea for another fifteen months. This time in the rear echelon, working in a medical supply depot.

I did this until I rotated stateside in March of 1953.

~~Forty-Eight~~

Donald Degood

8th Combat Engineer BN

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

In January of 1951, I was drafted into the U.S. Army. There were thirty-one other guys on the bus to Columbus, Ohio, six of whom were high school classmates. We were taken to the train station and boarded a train, which took us to Fort Knox, Kentucky for our basic training.

Our sixteen weeks of training was both physically and mentally demanding. Up at 2:00 AM to wash our barracks, or up at 3:00 AM for a ten mile hike. We trained to be crew members on tanks. We simulated amphibious landings by climbing up and down rope ladders. Generally speaking, basic training stunk.

Following basic, I went home on a seventeen day furlough before going overseas. After our leave, a high school friend and I left for Seattle, Washington. During the first part of June we had three days of processing at Fort Lawton, before shipping out. When we had finished our paperwork—making out our Wills, and making sure our beneficiaries on our life insurance were correct—we were transported to Seattle Docks to board our troop ship.

After boarding, a Navy guy came by with blank pieces of paper for us to sign. He told us he needed our signatures so they would know who was on board. Keirns and I decided he was a clerk trying to make a list for KP duty, so we didn't sign it—we were right.

The next day, the rest of the five-thousand troops boarded the ship. As the tug boats pulled the ship away from the docks, there was a band playing and people waving good-bye to us. I didn't know any of them; I just wanted to wave back. To do so, four of us had to climb a ladder that went to one of the lifeboats. We were told a couple of times to get down from the ladder by

an army private wearing an armband with “Guard” written on it. We went back up the ladder a third time, and this time when we were told to get down, the guy on the bottom rung told the individual to “Kiss our ass.” This was a huge mistake! The guy standing there had more gold braid on his uniform than you could shake a stick at; he was a Chief Petty Officer. It seemed he ran the ship, the captain only steered it. Guess what? We four were put on KP duty—everyday—for the entire voyage. Imagine, fourteen days without ever seeing land.

After fourteen days, we docked at Yokohama, Japan, a suburb of Tokyo. We were taken to Camp Drake for final processing before going on to Korea. I only have two memories of Camp Drake. First, we were taken to the rifle range, given five rounds of ammo, and told to zero in our weapons; the next time we fired them would be at the enemy. To this day, I still have no idea what I hit. Secondly, after firing our five rounds we marched back to our company area. Here they called out names of those who would attend additional schooling.

“Degood” Medical School in Osaka, Japan. I really didn’t want to be a medic. However, the peace talks had started a day or two earlier, so I felt the war would be over by the time I finished school—wrong!

We were schooled on general first aid, dressing wounds, and putting splints on broken bones. Basically, we were to give first aid and get the wounded to an aid station as quickly as possible.

The Medical School is where I became good friends with Benjamin Franklin Dunkle, known as “Jiggs,” from Johnstown, Ohio. We had our evening meal in Sasebo, Japan, and breakfast in Pusan, Korea; our voyage to Korea was a short one.

We stayed in Pusan a few days processing through the “pipeline.” That was the first time I had heard that phrase and actually thought I was going to be working on some kind of pipeline. It turned out that all replacements to Korea were called “pipeline” or “cannon fodder.” This is where Jiggs and I split up. I was sent to Yong Dong Po, which was close to Seoul, to the division headquarters for the 1st Cavalry. Jiggs went to the 2nd Infantry Division to be a medic in a rifle company. He was killed in action during September 1951. [*As a medic for the 23rd Infantry Regiment, he was killed in action on September 6, 1951; during the battle for Bloody Ridge.*]

After spending a day at headquarters, I was sent to Company C, 8th Combat Engineers. I was just beginning to know people when I was transferred to B Company. Here I became known as “Doc” to forty guys—I went everywhere they went.

The reason I was transferred to B Company was a tank patrol had been ambushed with three engineers wounded, and one taken as a prisoner of war. The medic that was with them had a nervous breakdown and was sent somewhere else. I was never ambushed while on a patrol, but the fear of knowing it could happen was always with me. However, on one patrol we did encounter small arms fire and had some grenades thrown at us. So one of the tanks advanced to our location and shot its .50 caliber machine gun at the hill where the fire was coming from. We had no more trouble that day.

The Combat Engineers job was to lay mines, probe for and remove enemy mines, and build roads for the infantry. In the mornings I would go to the platoon sergeants tent to see who he wanted me to go with; it was usually the squad that was doing the most dangerous job. The most dreaded task was tank patrol.

Tankers had a right to be leery of hitting a land mine, because they would knock off a tread, disabling it. One time we had just caught up with the tanks, when a tanker was calling for a medic. I rushed up there finding a tank that had hit an anti-tank mine. The explosion had blown the escape hatch, which is located under the assistant driver’s feet, straight up breaking both of his legs in several places. I gave him a shot of morphine, took two ram rods—per leg—and put splints on his legs. I was looking for litter bearers to evacuate him, when the tank commander said they had to go back and check out the damage; they took the wounded tanker with them.

Roughly two weeks after I arrived at B Company, we went in one of our established anti-personnel minefields; we found a dead soldier from Signal Corps. Cautiously, we moved him out of the minefield so those who took care of the dead could do their jobs. A few days later, the letter I had written to Jiggs came back marked “Deceased.” I went out in a field, by myself, and cried.

It was October 1951, and the engineers were laying “Bouncing Betties” along a ridge in front of the infantry bunkers. We had stopped for chow, at noon, when a shell went off over the hill where we had just come

from. Somebody was yelling “Medic,” so I took two engineers with me and we found another soldier from Signal Corps lying in the minefield—wounded. He told me to be careful because it was a minefield; I told him I knew and that some guys were coming to disarm them, so we could get him out.

I asked him if he had seen the strand of barbed wire with signs in four different languages that said, “Mine Field.”

He said, “Yes.”

My next question was, “Why are you in here, then?”

He told me he was checking the telephone lines, which were laid on top of the ground, from the MLR to the outpost and he thought he could make it through. Finally, we were able to get him out, but he was a long way from being out of danger. A piece of shrapnel was buried in his back. Not being trained, or qualified, to remove it, I could only wrap a compress bandage around him—hoping to contain the bleeding. After giving him a shot of morphine, I called for litter bearers. They came and carried him away.

Company B was assigned to the 7th Cavalry Regiment, which goes back to George Armstrong Custer’s Indian fighting 7th Cavalry. Their motto “Garry Owen” was plastered anywhere that a piece of paper could be stapled. Anywhere they went, we went; either behind them or out in front of them.

During the first part of October, the 7th (along with the rest of the 1st Cavalry and other UN forces) made one final push, moving up a mile or so. For a couple days, I watched as they hauled dead soldiers out of that valley. All lying face down on stretchers with a poncho covering them; legs with boots on, sticking out the end.

In late November, the entire division went in reserve at Uijonbu. Usually during this time you replenished your supplies and took on new replacements, so you could go back on line. We also had to get booster shots. The day they were to be given, Captain Sackett, the medical officer, called me over and told me to give my platoon their shots. I had to live with these guys, so I begged him to let me give shots to strangers, but he wouldn’t hear of it. Apparently, I must have done a good job, because no one got a sore arm and life went on as usual. We were in reserve during

Thanksgiving, and we had turkey, dressing, shrimp salad, sweet taters, pumpkin pie, and the whole works.

After Thanksgiving, rumors were flying all over the place. One was, we were headed back to the States, or other places—like Hawaii. And of course there was the dreaded rumor—back to the line. Our platoon, like most military units, had one soldier that would not keep himself clean. After Thanksgiving, we had an inspection by the battalion commander—a full-bird colonel. While inspecting the troops, he stopped in front of this guy and asked the company commander if he was going to clean this man up “before we go to Japan.” It was no rumor! This came straight from the main mans mouth.

We were leaving “Old Baldy” where we had spent a lot of our time; we were to be replaced by the Oklahoma National Guard. [*The 45th Infantry Division.*]

Leaving from Inchon, we arrived at Camp Crawford, located in Sapporo, Japan, on December 24, 1951—what a Christmas present. Crawford had brick barracks with steam heat, in-house showers, and flush toilets. I had almost forgotten how to use them. Sapporo was the largest city on the island of Hokkaido; the northern most island of Japan. The island is on the same parallel line that intersects the middle of Canada. So, guess what? Snow was everywhere. We didn’t see bare ground until April 1952.

At Crawford we went through different types of training. We had amphibious training, and even had to see how fast we could evacuate the island. The Army wanted to see how long it would take since we were only ten miles across the sea from Russia. It was during this exercise that I flew on an airplane for the first time.

If a trooper had earned thirty-six points, they were rotated back to the States. Front line soldiers were given four points a month; rear echelon soldiers received two points. And those stationed in Japan were given one point. By July 1952, the platoon had lost half of its men to rotation. We finally received new replacements to get us back up to full strength. Later that month, our seven month vacation came to an end—back to Korea.

We boarded a ship and docked in Pusan. It would take most of the day for us to board the train, and I knew my friend—John Keirns—was

stationed in Pusan. I went to an MP Guard House and asked if they could connect me to his address.

When a voice answered the phone, I asked, “Is Private Keirns there?”

He replied, “This is Sgt. Keirns speaking.”

I said, “Well kiss my ass, Sgt. Keirns.”

Yelling into the phone, John asked, “Who is this?”

I answered, “Corporal Degood.”

John came down to the railroad station and we were able to visit for a few hours.

Here we boarded an old steam engine, which we rode for a day and night. Along with Louis Marr, my buddy from New York, I rode in a jeep fastened down on a flat car. The coal burning engine passed through several tunnels on our way to Song-Zong-Ni, which was a small village in the southern part of Korea. When we arrived, you couldn’t tell the white guys from the black guys with all the soot from the coal fired engine.

There was a little Korean boy in the village, who spoke broken English, saying he was a “number one washy-washy boy.” He left our camp with two duffel bags full of dirty GI fatigues—never to be seen again. Needless to say, I knew the Army would take care of our laundry, so I didn’t loose any clothes.

Baker Company was sent here to build a prison compound to house North Korean prisoners. The prisoners actually built the prison, the engineers were straw bosses. We were here until mid-September 1952, and then we went back to Hokkaido, but this time to Camp Chitsoe II. This was a big let down from Camp Crawford. Chitsoe had Quonset huts with fuel oil heaters, instead of steam heated barracks. Knowing I only had a few more months, I made the most of it.

I spent my second Christmas at Camp Drake, processing to go back to the States. The day after our ship docked in San Francisco, we boarded a troop train. It was a first class passenger train with upper berths, a lovely dining room, and excellent food. The train took us to Fort Custer, Michigan, to be discharged.

After several stops along the way, I finally arrived in Maryville, Ohio—home; my Army career was over.

~~Forty-Nine~~

Otto White

23rd Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was born on November 28, 1929; a month after the beginning of the Great Depression.

* * * * *

Before I reached the age of six, my father passed away while our family was stationed at Camp Grant, Illinois. To help provide for the family, and keep us together, mother took in washings. There were three boys, me be the youngest; another brother died at birth.

Being the youngest, I always had the most clothes—a lot of hand-me downs. Needless to say, we always knew what we were getting for Christmas; flannel shirts, denim pants, and sweaters.

With no work to be found, my oldest brother, Richard (Dick), went to work for the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC. He went to Wisconsin where they planted thousands of pine trees. During the eighth and ninth grades, I was able to find work at Rockford Bakeries, Inc.. In my sophomore year, I began working at A&P Food Store; at that time, this was the largest food retail store in the United States. I worked there through my senior year.

After graduating from high school, I was able to get a job at George D. Roper Corporation. Many of my classmates and friends joined the Reserves right out of high school. I can remember getting home every night from work and reading the newspaper to see how many had been killed over there—Korea.

In late 1950 I received my draft notice and was inducted into the U.S. Army on March 22, 1951. Late summer, or early fall, I left Seattle,

Washington aboard the *USNS James O'Hara* along with two-hundred fifty other soldiers.

After arriving in Japan, and filling out paperwork, I would be assigned to Baker Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, which was located on Hill 1179; later known as Heartbreak Ridge.

It was middle to late August when I arrived on Heartbreak. Next to our CP was a sign that read:

Your on the hill
You clumb the grade
If you're going to Baker
You got it made

A news crew was going to film us for part of their newsreel. So, we had a couple of guys that worked hard in getting an air compressor up the hill. We were going to spray paint our helmets; and of course shine our shoes—we had to look sharp.

At daybreak on September 1, the attack started. There was very little action until we came close to the ridge line. The Chinese started shooting at us with their burp guns, and throwing grenades over the edge at us.

Suddenly, two of our guys starting running the wrong way, and someone yelled, "Get your --- back here, or get shot!"

I yelled, "If he misses, I won't!"

I don't believe anyone shot at the deserters—we didn't have enough time.

I quickly turned around and started feeding mortar shells to our corporal; a Japanese guy from California. He was firing the mortar without its tripod. Enemy mortar shells were hitting all around us—hitting almost every position. There must have been five-or-six, with each one getting closer to me. Suddenly, I stood up. Why? I was knocked down the hill. Wounded, I crawled back to where I was before the mortar round hit, finding the corporal lying face down. He had suffered a concussion wound.

From the back of his head, to the middle of his back, looked like he had been struck with a machete.

I remember yelling “medic” several times, but no words came out. So, I began to move back and after a while I sat down because I felt weak. My wrist and arm were in pain, and covered in blood. Even though I couldn’t feel it, I also had a stomach wound. As I set there, the corporal walked by me—I couldn’t believe it.

I had been hit, simultaneously, with small arms fire and fragments from a mortar shell. My left wrist had broken bones, and there was a hole in my left forearm that I could put my finger through. I also had a wound to my intestines.

It was 9:05 AM when I was wounded; it would be 9:05 PM when I arrived at an aid station: twelve full hours before receiving medical attention. I recall the doctor checking me out and calling the helicopter service for a helicopter to evacuate me. The voice on the other end of the radio, said the helicopters were done flying for the day.

The next voice I heard was the doctor. He was yelling, “I have a man with 105 degree temperature. Get your --- back here right now!” Needless to say, the helicopter arrived in short order.

They strapped me on the outside of the helicopter and flew me to a M.A.S.H. unit. I woke up with a bandage on my wrist and a ten inch incision on my stomach. From there I was transferred to the hospital ship, *USS Repose*.

I went on to spend time in Tripler Hospital, a hospital in San Jose, East St. Louis Hospital, and Battle Creek Hospital. I spent one year, and went through three operations, at Battle Creek.

* * * * *

During the first hour of battle, Baker Company lost one-hundred and nine men. I am one of three that made it from the fourth platoon. Within a few weeks of me being wounded, my mother received a telegram reporting me as being killed in action.

* * * * *

[In 1986, Clint Eastwood directed, and starred, in the movie “Heartbreak Ridge.” The movie begins with film footage shot during the battle in which Otto was wounded. There are some frames that show wounded infantrymen and medics. One series shows two men assisting a wounded soldier. Otto believes that may have been him.]

~~*Fifty*~~

Alfred Eckhart

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On November 2, 1950, I was drafted into the service. I was sent to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky for sixteen weeks of basic training. After completing basic, I was made sergeant and transferred to Roger Company—as instructor—for a sixteen week course on basic training.

* * * * *

At the end of August 1951, I was shipped to Korea. Here I was assigned as a squad leader in Company D, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. I was to be a forward observer for calling in mortar rounds. However, I was assigned to Charlie Company, which was a rifle company.

The night I arrived at D Company, the operating officer handed me a map, a pair of binoculars, and said, “There is your position at C Company on that hill a couple of miles away.” I worked my way up before nightfall, because when darkness came no one was allowed in or out of the perimeters. When I arrived I met the forward observer who was to be with me the first night. During that night the North Koreans started a barrage of mortar fire, and threw hand grenades. The forward observer, who was with me, was hit in the neck with shrapnel. And all through the night I had to keep pressure on the side of his head with my hand—to stop the bleeding. The next morning he was evacuated by a helicopter, and I never heard any more about him. Just a few feet from our foxhole was the company commander—dead.

My indoctrination to Korea was that I was on the line for nine straight days. I remember on the seventh day, a runner from D Company came to my location and presented me with the “Rifleman Combat Badge.”

Thirty-five of us replacements went in that same night. Except for me, all were assigned as riflemen. At the end of the ninth day, only three of those thirty-five rode off that hill in a jeep. They were all either killed or wounded. There was some fierce fighting during those nine days.

In the fall of 1951, I was a forward observer on another hill located above the 38th parallel. It was a beautiful, warm fall morning and as I started up a long hog-back hill, I noticed a huge rock. Immediately I stopped and dropped to my knee. I was carrying a carbine that I had taken off a dead second lieutenant, which had three banana clips that held thirty-five rounds each. With the clips hanging from my neck, I looked around and noticed the large rock had an opening—it was a cave-like bunker.

From the back of the cavern I saw a North Korean come out, and after about three jumps he was down over the hill. Moments later, another one came out. I thought they might be angling behind me. When the third one came out—I started firing. During the next thirty minutes, I killed or wounded twenty-five enemy soldiers; then it was quiet. A North Korean, with a white flag, came out of the bunker along with forty-two of his fellow soldiers; they all surrendered to me.

I began yelling at some men from Charlie Company, who were in the trenches below me. They came up, surrounded the North Koreans, and took them back to the MP's. I was unable to go with them, because I ran into a major who was taking over our area and he needed some information.

After helping him, a jeep came to take me to company headquarters. I had orders to go to Hokkaido, Japan, to train the Japanese NPR (National Police Reserve) in the use of mortars and heavy weapons. I was one of twenty-three selected from non-coms, artillery, infantry, etc... We were flown to Hokkaido, which is the northern most island in Japan. When we arrived, the snow was up to our chests. I believe that was the nicest Christmas I would ever have.

This was a welcomed break from the fighting.

~~*Fifty-One*~~

George DeSha

7th Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

At the age of twenty-one, I enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. After basic training, I left San Diego, California aboard the *Marine Lynx*. Approximately ten days later, we arrived in Japan; from there—Korea.

It was September of 1951 when I arrived in Korea and I was assigned to Able Company, 1st BN, 7th Marines.

* * * * *

In November we were on the eastern front—on Hill 812. It was next to Hill 749, where there was a lot of fighting. We were in trenches, and there was a Navy guy using a bunker in our trench. He was the Forward Observer for directing fire from the battleships.

I was cooking a can of pork-n-beans, on a heat can, when they brought up a can of beer for everyone. I had the can of beans sitting on the side of the trench, and was looking forward to eating them and chasing them down with a cold beer. Suddenly, the “gooks” started shelling us, and they blew up my can of beer along with my BAR. We all dove into our trenches.

I took my busted up BAR to the company commander, Lt. Ulritch. He told me that he was glad I was alive and he would get me a new BAR. It arrived two hours later. I just knew I was going to get in trouble for not taking better care of my equipment.

* * * * *

It was January of 1952, and the weather was terrible. The mercury was reaching twenty degrees below zero, with the wind blowing at thirty to thirty-five miles per hour. We had been out for about an hour when

headquarters called us back in. They did not want to lose any of us from frostbite.

We were wearing our “Mickey Mouse” boots, which were great; they were a thermal type boot. Snow would get in your boot, and as it melted you could feel it run down to your feet. By the time it reached your foot, it was hot water.

* * * * *

The hills in Korea were so steep that we literally had to tie ropes to trees and pull ourselves up the hills. It was now March of 1952, and I was pulling guard duty at 2:00 AM. I thought I saw a patrol of North Koreans coming up the hill. I suddenly saw a muzzle blast. I emptied two magazines from my BAR, which held twenty rounds each.

The following morning a group of soldiers went down the hill to check out what had happened—I stayed behind. They found a North Korean soldier who was badly wounded, but he died before they could take him prisoner. The retreating enemy must have dragged off six or seven dead with them; they said there was blood everywhere. The soldiers who went to check it out got all the credit.

* * * * *

On May 28, 1952, we advanced on Hill 104, which was about the size of a city block. With us was Staff Sgt. Rollins Bryant, who was a veteran of World War II and a drill instructor at Parris Island. He said, “If I can come out of the South Pacific, I can make Hill 104 in a day.”

As we were taking the hill, we came under the largest enemy artillery barrage any Marine outfit had been subjected to since the beginning of the war—4,000 rounds. It was so thick, they looked like a swarm of gnats.

I was in a hand grenade fight with a “gook” that lasted for about four minutes. Needless to say, I got the best of him. Sgt. Bryant took shrapnel to his legs, but he continued to guide us and give us words of encouragement; later, he would be mortally wounded. His body was riddled, from head to toe, with shrapnel. He had survived the South Pacific, but only lasted two weeks in the hills of Korea.

We had nine that were killed in action and one-hundred seven wounded taking this hill. However, I must say, the Navy Corpsman were the greatest. While tending to the wounded, they suffered one killed and seven wounded. Not one was awarded a medal, and that is something that has often upset me.

On the 13th of June, we were on Hill 104 for the second time. They needed volunteers for a mission, so Lt Woodward, Master Sgt. Brown, Cpl. Alward, Cpl. Barnes, and myself, also a corporal, volunteered. We were to gather information on the enemy and capture a prisoner, if possible.

At 2:00 AM, when we started our way up the hill, the moon was to our back. As we crawled on our hands and knees, we went through some bad territory—a minefield. Amazingly, we all made it through safely. Suddenly, we spotted a Chinese soldier by himself. Lt. Woodward and I continued on. He must have thought we were some of his men, because he just sat there. I walked up to him, and got close enough to touch him. As I reached for him, he threw a grenade at my feet then took off running. We dove for cover.

After the dust settled, Chinese were coming from everywhere and they were shooting at us with their burp guns. We took off running, with about twenty-five in tow. However, they soon left as our fire team came up and opened up on them with machine gun fire.

The lieutenant had his helmet shot off, and I received a bullet in my arm—right above the elbow. I was evacuated to the hospital ship, *Haven*. They thought my arm had sustained more damage, so I was transferred to a hospital in Japan. I must say, it was great to come off the front where I had been living in muddy foxholes, to be able to sleep in a bed—with linens.

Six weeks later I was sent back to the front lines.

During my time in Korea, I went sixty-three days without a shower, shave, or change of clothes. Those in reserve say they can smell the ones coming off the front lines before they reached the reserve area.

I left Korea in September 1952.

~~*Fifty-Two*~~

Morton “Pete” Wood, Jr.

5th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

My first military experience was three years in the Washington D.C. High School Cadet Corps. After graduating from high school, in 1940, I enrolled in Virginia Tech which at that time was a full, twenty-four hour a day military academy.

After finishing my third year, World War II was in full swing, and ROTC Programs across the country were closed. Those of us entering our senior year were sent home to wait for our induction into the Army. Receiving our notice, we then went to basic training, then back to college under the ASTP program. While attending the program, we waited for openings in the Coast Artillery Officer Candidate School. At graduation we were handed our commissions in one hand, and orders for us to report to the infantry in the other.

I was assigned to the 66th Infantry Division and on December 1, 1944 I boarded the troopship *USS George Washington*, bound for England. On the twelfth, we docked at Southampton, England.

On Christmas Eve 1944, most of our 262nd and 264th Regiments boarded the *Leopoldville*, which as an old converted Belgian passenger ship. The compartment for Item Company, 264th Infantry Regiment, which I belonged to, was several decks below the loading deck. To reach our deck, we climbed down a vertical ladder that passed through holes about three feet in diameter at each deck.

Our cabins were nothing fancy, but they were comfortable. There were six of us to a room on two triple-decker bunks; I had one of the top bunks. One of my bunkmates was Lt. Corbie Truman, who we were told was a nephew of Harry S Truman. Some time during the day we had a lifeboat

drill. When the alarm sounded, we put on our life-jackets and went on deck to our assigned locations.

I was in my bunk that evening, around 6:00 PM, when the torpedo hit. I was thrown against the ceiling but not hurt. The alarm sounded. This time it was not a drill—it was real!

Making our way to our assigned locations, I stood on deck surrounded by men from the third platoon. From a deck above, someone using a megaphone was informing us that the ship was not sinking and that we would be towed to port. (We later found out that Cherbourg was only a few miles away.) Shortly after the announcement, some of the crew started lowering the lifeboats. Some of the troops, who thought the crew was getting the boats ready for us, began to cheer. The cheering soon stopped when it was realized that the crew themselves were abandoning ship. They had probably gone through other sinkings, so looking back; it is hard to criticize them. However, at that moment our feelings were not too kind.

The ship was beginning to list and rumor was we might have to abandon ship. Whoever was on the megaphone was doing a good job of keeping us calm, and warning us not to leave the ship.

Suddenly, a special thing happened; a soldier started singing “The Star Spangled Banner!” Soon, everyone was singing, whether they knew the words or not. I didn’t, but I could hardly sing anyway because I kept choking up with emotion.

The *HMS Brilliant*, a British destroyer, pulled up along side of us. The guy with the megaphone said that some troops would be allowed to jump, but only when and where he directed. The sea was still rough as we could see the destroyer bobbing up and down. It wasn’t long before the man on the megaphone pointed down at me and told me to line up my platoon and bring them up to his deck. Not wasting any time, we were in line and heading to the spot where the other men were jumping to the destroyer.

Lt. Ben Thrailkill and Lt. George Washko, friends of mine, were directing the jumping. They judged the movements, both vertical and horizontal, of both ships, gave the signal, and sometimes a shove, to each man when the two decks were close enough for a safe jump.

Even though I twisted an ankle when I landed among some sort of depth-charge device, my jump was fairly easy. The jump was made easier

since I had given my life-jacket to another trooper who couldn't swim; he had left his on his bunker. I was reprimanded for not having mine, but it was too late to do anything about it; nobody was going to go back down to our compartment to look for one.

After jumping, British seamen took us to a cabin—below deck—where they gave us hot drinks and blankets. I was glad to see that most of the third platoon was already there. However, five men didn't make it. They were presumed drowned when the ship finally sank. My best guess is that they were on KP or latrine duty when we had lifeboat drills, and never knew where our platoon was to meet. Or they could have been away from the platoon when the torpedo hit.

We learned later that the German U-boat *U-486* was responsible for torpedoing the *Leopoldville*. A few months later the *U-486* was sunk by the British destroyer, *HMS Tapir*.

Finally, the *Brilliant* delivered us to the dock at Cherbourg. Since we were actually bound for LeHavre, France, the authorities at Cherbourg had to receive the survivors. Of the approximately 2100 aboard, about 1300 survived. After taking on new replacements, within a few weeks we were in combat against the Germans.

Just before Christmas 1945, I was able to get a month home leave. Before heading back to Europe, I was able to apply for immediate discharge, which I did. I elected to remain in the reserves and to stay in the infantry, instead of going back to Coast Artillery—this would be a bad choice.

In January of 1951, I was recalled to active duty—as a First Lieutenant. When I received my notice, my minister, boss, mother's boss, parents doctor, and a neighbor—active duty Major General Parker—all persuaded me to file for a hardship discharge. The reason being was my father's poor health and mother's age. All paperwork was forwarded to the Army, which resulted in a weeks delay to reporting for duty while they considered my request. Not hearing anything, I packed my gear and flew to Camp Stoneman, California. As we were boarding a troopship to Japan, I literally had one foot on the gangplank when I received orders from General Parker. I was to report immediately to the 3rd Infantry Regiment, in Fort Myer, Virginia, which was about a ten minute drive from our house.

Not only does the 3rd provide guards for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, they also conduct military funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, march in parades, and other duties. Tall, erect men were the one's chosen to be guards. At 5'-8", I was never a guard.

Early in the war, General Walton Walker was killed and his body was brought back for burial at Arlington Cemetery. I was in charge of directing traffic around the approaches and crossroads at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the adjacent amphitheater, where the service was to be held. Those in attendance were to be President Truman, along with a number of military and government dignitaries.

We had two directives: first, be sure the caisson, pulled by white horses and coming across the river from downtown Washington, was not held up by traffic. Secondly, make sure that President Truman's motorcade, which was to arrive earlier, got through without any delay.

Things were going great until Truman's motorcade arrived late, and from a different direction. Needless to say, the motorcade and caisson arrived at the amphitheater's crossroad at the same time. Who goes first? Who gets the hatchet if the wrong one has to wait?

I had my number one sergeant located at the key intersections, which was about fifty feet from my position. He waved at me as if he was asking, "Which one?" After freezing for a few seconds, I replied back, "The horses." So, the caisson, all the attendant vehicles, the slow-step marchers, and drummers all filed by the President's motorcade. You could tell by the looks in the eyes of the motorcycle policeman—in the motorcade—they didn't like my decision. However, the ceremony started on time.

After the ceremony ended, and everyone was on their way home, the major in charge sped by my post and gave me what I hoped was a "well done" signal. Or could it have been "I want to see you in my office" signal?

I never heard a word about my decision; however, I couldn't help but wonder if it had anything to do with me receiving orders shortly afterwards to go to Korea.

In September 1951, I arrived in Korea and was assigned to Company C, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. When I joined Charlie Company, the officers were Captain Shaw, who was in the same outfit as me during World War II. Executive Officer was First Lieutenant Heminger,

weapons platoon leader was First Lieutenant Lieb, first platoon leader was Second Lieutenant Cochrane, and I was in charge of the second platoon. Third platoon leader was Second Lieutenant Walsh (or Welsh). Two days later, Capt. Shaw decided he couldn't do the job and quit; Heminger then took over. On the third day, Lt. Cochrane was killed. Lt. Lieb was killed on the fifth day.

During the early morning on October 1st, we left outpost line "Wyoming," which was on the northeast side of the Imjin River, to secure a line of hills through which another battalion was to attack the following morning. Charlie Company was the battalion point, and only light resistance was expected. As evening approached, we were within a mile of our objective. At this time my second platoon took over at point; we were now leading the whole battalion. Having good maps and aerial photos, I could see the hill off in the distance.

As we reached the foot of the hill, we fixed bayonets and charged up the hill. When we reached the top we found no enemy, so we started digging in around the perimeter. By this time other platoons should have been on our flanks. So, I decided to send out small patrols to see if they could locate them. They couldn't. Shortly afterwards, I received a radio message from the Battalion CO. It basically asked if I knew where I was. Apparently, I had gone too far out. I was sure we were at the right place. A messenger from battalion soon appeared and I was to go back and report to the colonel.

Arriving back at battalion, the colonel chewed me out and told me what a dumb-ox I was. Suddenly, an officer from S-2 came running over, waving a map, and told the colonel that the battalion had stopped about a mile short. The colonel looked at me and said, "Get on back to your platoon." About ninety minutes after I had returned, you could hear the rest of the battalion, cussing and fuming, as they were coming up the hill.

Over the next sixteen days—September 30 through October 15—we were involved in trying to take Hill 346. The hill was located north of Seoul, and east of the Imjin, in the Yonchon-Chorwon region. We watched as the hills wooded ridge turned into a mass of barren rock. Hill 346 later became known as Old Baldy.

On the 6th of October, we launched our first attack against Hill 346. The first to move out was the third platoon, followed by my second. The third was already withdrawing by the time we caught up with them. The Chinese had a line of trenches and dugouts across the face of the hill. From their trench line, they had tunnels that went through the hill to the backside, so they could easily move up men and supplies. There was not enough cover, so we also had to withdraw back to the company lines. The Chinese counterattacked, pushing us back a half mile or so. My platoon sergeant was badly wounded along with a squad leader; several were killed.

Two days later, we tried again. This time we moved out earlier in the day, but first with an intense artillery barrage. There was also to have been air support, which never materialized. Like the first attack, the third platoon led the way, with us following. By this time the first platoon was no longer intact.

Our artillery fire had the Chinese pinned down, so we were able to advance. The third was able to establish a base of fire, in a shallow gully, and we passed through them moving up the steepest part of the hill. As we approached the trenches, the Chinese rolled grenades towards us; they were exploding all around us. I'm sure they didn't know we were up there, but the earlier air strike that never materialized did.

Our CO immediately issued orders for us to withdraw; we had no other choice. I'm certain we may have left dead and wounded on the hill. There were two guys in my platoon that were too far in front of the rest of us. They never heard us shouting at them to fall back; they just kept on going up the hill. I've never been able to find out if they were killed or captured.

We withdrew to our position facing the hill. For the next day or two, we watched as a Mosquito—a small, slow-flying plane—came in and marked target areas with tracer bullets. Then the Marine Corsairs, which were flying out of ground-fire range, swooped down with napalm, rocket, and machine gun fire—plastering the Chinese trench lines. As soon as the air strikes let up, we could see them repairing the damage. I'm sure they had many dead. However, we would find out there were plenty of them left.

We were sent back a few miles, to a peaceful area, where we got showers, clean fatigues, underwear, and socks. The fatigues were never

your own, they were a clean pair they just handed you. I was handed one that had stripes for a buck sergeant instead of silver bars, but who cared?

After everyone got cleaned up, they gave us three cans of warm Budweiser; which lasted about ten minutes. We also practiced night attacks; I guess the higher-ups finally realized we were not going to take that hill in the daylight. They came up with the idea of lining the whole company—abreast—across the valley at the foot of Hill 346. We were to sneak up just short of their trenches, then at daybreak jump in and rout the Chinese.

By this time we had become so decimated that they sent up mail clerks, cooks, and non-coms from battalion—basically anyone that could carry a weapon. Assigned to my platoon was a Master Sergeant who was ready to rotate home. After only staying there one night, he disappeared the next day; I couldn't really blame him.

The following morning we had chow around 3:00 AM, then we were trucked up to our favorite hill—the one facing 346. It was tough moving through the darkness of night. We were tripping over rocks, tree roots, and cussing all the way. We were late getting to where we wanted to be when daylight caught us about two-thirds the way up. The Chinese began to fire at us with machine guns and mortars. Being one of the first to get hit—in the right hip—a medic was quickly called over to me. He gave me a shot of morphine, patched my wound, and placed me on a litter. These litter bearers were a brave and fearless group of men; they were oblivious of the mortar rounds falling around them. I yelled for them to take cover, but they had a job to do.

While being treated at the aid station, I told the doctor the bullet hole didn't hurt, but my right foot hurt like hell. They took off my boot, which I had bought in Japan on my way over, and couldn't find anything. I was soon taking a helicopter ride over the hills to a M.A.S.H. unit. During surgery they discovered I had serious nerve damage in my hip (more accurately, my ass), which was the cause of my foot pain, and paralysis to my leg.

In November 1951, I arrived at Walter Reed Hospital in a cast from waist to toe. Several months later a couple of us were in our beds moaning about not ever being able to play golf again; Freddy, with his artificial leg,

and me with my paralyzed lower leg. One of the wards overheard us and said, “You bunch of crybabies oughta quit bitchin’ and give it a try.”

To us this sounded like a challenge, so we took him up on it. After his shift was over, he loaded us in his flivver and away we went to a nearby course, with nine-holes. He held us up when we swung, and picked us up when we fell—we were hilarious.

On that day, Freddie and I quit feeling sorry for ourselves, and decided to join the real world.

I retired from the Army in the fall of 1952.

* * * * *

Sergeant James Beaver, a farm boy from Indiana, was transferred from another company to replace my wounded platoon sergeant.

Over our three can ration of Budweiser, we didn’t talk about our plans for our third attack on Hill 346. Instead we talked about our families, friends, and hometowns.

By the end of the following day I was at a M.A.S.H. unit, and James lay dead near the top of that miserable hill. He was one of the very few men in Korea that I had the privilege of getting to know—if only for a few hours.

There stands a small statue, in our yard, in his honor.

~~*Fifty-Three*~~

Anthony “Tony” Gurule’

Headquarters Battery of Divarty

24th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was born in a little coal mining village in the Purgatoire Valley of south central Colorado. Like most of the men in our village, my father worked for the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation in Valdez, Colorado. Life in a coal mining camp is like the Tennessee Ernie Ford song “*Sixteen Tons*” depicts. The men worked hard in the mines, but after the company store deducted the wages for groceries, and sundries that had been charged during the week, they brought very little money home on payday.

We left Valdez at the beginning on my teenage years, and moved to Dublin, California. In the summer of 1944 we moved to Oakland. We moved into a house off Twenty-Second Avenue, near East Twentieth Street; in an alley named Sonoma Way.

I met Leslie Frater at Roosevelt Junior High and I told him I was working at the Dutch Maid Bakery. He wanted a job, so I set him up with an appointment with Mrs. Meyer. She hired him, but he only stayed three months than disappeared.

One day in March of 1946, Leslie showed up at the bakery and he was dressed to kill. He had joined the Merchant Marines. He told me he had been to Okinawa, Guam, Midway, and the Christmas Island. He made more than five-hundred dollars in less than four months. The next day he took me to the Union Hall and Coast Guard Building in San Francisco. Here I officially joined the Union—Sailors Union of the Pacific. On my sixteenth birthday, I was ready to go; I was dispatched to the *SS Shuyler Colfax*, as a mess man.

* * * * *

It was early 1951, and I went home to hang around for a month. I went back to the Union Hall for another ship, and was dispatched as a Second Cook and Baker to a ship that was anchored in San Francisco Bay. I needed to go home and get my gear, so I called my mother asking her to pack my things. She informed me I had a letter that looked to be important; it was from the President of the United States.

I knew immediately what it was—I was being drafted. However, being in the Merchant Marines, I was exempt from the draft. Anyway, I had her open it and read it to me—I was right. So, instead of going home to get my gear, I returned to the Union Hall and told them to give my assignment to someone else, because I had been drafted.

Having sailed for the last four-and-a-half years with veterans of the Second World War, I got to listen to stories of heroes, and cowards. I had decided I wasn't going to be the latter.

Ted DuPriest, my brother-in-law of seven months, also received his draft notice. Both of us were ordered to report at 9:00 AM, on March 2, 1951, to the same draft board, located on the corner of Webster and Fourteenth Streets. Along with old friends and classmates, we boarded a Greyhound Bus headed for Fort Ord.

We soon learned the Army had many surprises for us, and there was one surprise I didn't care for. It was late in the day and we were in the final phase of processing, when I was confronted by a corporal I guessed to be nineteen, who spoke with a German accent. He had this stern military air about him, which I didn't like. He asked me what part of Mexico my parents were from and without hesitation I asked him, "What the hell has that got to do with me going into the Army."

Based on his accent, I figured he hadn't been in America but a short time. If I was right, he could have been one of those twelve or thirteen year old boys—in Germany—clicking their heels and shouting, "Hiel Hitler!" Now he's in America, in our Army, and accusing me of not being an American. When in reality, my family background goes back to the first surname Gurule' in 1682.

Shortly, a second lieutenant came up to us because we were holding up the line. The other guys were tired and wanted their bedding, so they could go to bed. I told him, "This German is questioning this American soldier's

American citizenship, and I resent it.” The corporal then made a mistake. He told the lieutenant, “I gave this recruit an order to tell me where in Mexico his parents were born, and he wouldn’t tell me.” The lieutenant moved him aside, and told me to move along.

The following morning we were awakened early and were told after breakfast that some of us would be going to Camp Roberts—I was in that group. The other guys would remain at Fort Ord. When I finished eating, a Mess Sergeant asked if I would be interested in staying at Fort Ord as a cook. I politely thanked him, but told him I wasn’t interested since I was a cook, and baker, in the Merchant Marines.

A Mess Sergeant at Camp Roberts made me the same offer, and he got the same answer. When basic started I was assigned to Company D, 48th BN, and having a little ROTC in junior high, I could march and do the Manual of Arms. The first sergeant and field sergeant were both veterans of the early fighting in Korea; both had been wounded, and sent back home to recuperate and train recruits. They told us at the end of basic, we would be going to Korea. They continued on telling us we needed to learn to survive, because in Korea the terrain was rough, winters were extremely cold, and the summers were hot.

After the 4:30 AM “up and at em,” you quickly showered and made your bed. If it wasn’t tight enough to bounce the sarge’s half dollar, he would tear your bed apart and you had to remake it while the other guys watched. When bed-check was finished, you had to fallout fully dressed, with rifle in hand, in front of the barracks—for inspection. Then it was a one mile, double timed march to the mess hall for breakfast.

We also learned how to break apart our M-1 rifle, and any other weapon an infantry soldier would come in contact with, and reassemble it.

It was now graduation day; and in perfect formation, we proudly marched around the parade ground ready from inspection by the base commander. He told us that they had done their best to teach us how to survive in combat—the rest was up to us.

We were given a weeks leave to spend with family and friends before we had to report to Port Chicago, near Martinez, California. It was May 1951 and we were shipping out to Korea.

* * * * *

We all gathered on the dock and sat on our duffel bags. To help hide our feelings, guys told jokes and I told stories of my years at sea with the Merchant Marines. It was around 10:00 AM when we organized in formation. With our duffel bags slung over our shoulders, we headed towards the ships gangplank. Finally aboard ship, most of the men lined close to the ships railing to wave goodbye to their loved ones. However, Oliver Medeiros, Alberto Granados, and I went below to the galley to find something to eat.

We were taken into the hold we would be sleeping in, and we were allowed to pick our bunks. After twelve days of sailing, we docked at Yokohama, Japan, but we were not given shore leave. I had been here several times during my days as a Merchant Marine.

After disembarkation, we were taken to Camp Drake. Here we boarded another Navy ship and headed to Inchon. From there we were taken to Yong Dong Po, which was a short distance from Seoul.

As we traveled to Yong Dong Po, there must have been a hundred trucks in our convoy. Arriving at night, even though there was still a little daylight left, we were fed a late supper. After which, we took our duffel bags and leaned them up against a wall—or rocks—and were soon asleep, for it had been a long day.

We were at a Repo Depot and there were several thousand men scattered over a large area. Everyone was lined up for breakfast, as names were being called. When a name was called, they were instructed to report to a certain area. Here they were loaded onto deuce-and-a-half trucks, and delivered to the units in need of replacements.

One night I was lying on my duffel bag, with my helmet down over my eyes. Sleeping next to me was a guy with his boot laces untied. I thought back to when I was seven years old, in grammar school, in Valdez. We had a kid—Agapito Espinosa—in the second grade who never seemed to have laces in his shoes. I moved, causing my helmet to fall off, and as I reached for it I noticed the guy—it was Agapito! The last time I saw him, he was about thirteen years old.

While we were still waiting for our names to be called, we met a guy—Norman Smith—from Oakland. During basic he special ordered a pair of boots from Georgia, and he was complaining that they were too loose. My boots were tight, so we traded. Norman was assigned to the 19th Infantry Regiment, and while on a patrol during his first week with his unit, he was killed; he was wearing my boots.

It was now day three, and I had to go to the latrine. I could vaguely hear names being called over the loudspeaker. When I returned, Oliver, Alberto, and half the guys I was with, were gone. They had been assigned to the 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. Later that day, my name was called; I was assigned to Headquarters Battery of Divarty, 24th Infantry Division.

After arriving, I was taken to Captain Spivey, the Battery Commander's tent. I informed him that while having served in the Merchant Marines, I had been to Korea a few years earlier. He told me that he had been in Korea since the Pusan Perimeter, and as he put it, "When we got our ass kicked."

The captain said since my records showed that I had been a cook, they could use one in their mess hall. I told him, "With all due respect, I have already turned that job down twice already, since coming into this man's army..." He said they needed a forward observer in the survey team. I told him that would be okay, but I would need to be trained since all my training had been as an infantryman; my training started the next day.

Since I knew nothing about what a surveyor did, I started out as a rod and tape man. Sgt. Gilliam kept telling me one needed strong legs for this job, because it involved a lot of walking. By the end of the week, I was ready to go on a mission with them.

Our missions included establishing locations for observation posts, azimuth orientation lines, reference points, potential target points, and potential firing points for our artillery batteries. I soon learned to be an instrument operator and would get my first taste of action against Chinese and North Korean forces.

Four guys from our team climbed to the top of a hill in search of a trig point, while three others had gone to a pre-arranged location, to set up a red and white surveyor's pole. Then they would measure off two-hundred yards

and put up another flag pole, so the instrument operator could shoot a triangulation. However, heavy shrubs and debris hampered our view, so some of the guys started to clear the shrubs with their machetes. Being a country boy, and having hunted, I said the machetes might make an echoing noise and alert the Chinese of our position; thereby, causing them to lob mortar shells at us. I asked our team leader if I could set up an instrument in top of a tree located next to where the trig point was located. Permission was granted, so up the twenty-five foot tree I went—with a sextant.

Soon we were spotted by the Chinese and the mortar rounds started coming in. Not long before we arrived, heavy fighting had taken place and the tree I climbed up was riddled with bullet holes. So, with the incoming mortar rounds, the ground began to shake causing the tree to fall. On my backside, I landed on a solid flat rock, which knocked the breath out of me.

The team immediately evacuated the hill; they carried me as far as they could, which was about three miles. We made it back to our vehicle, which we had hidden in a ravine, and made it back to our unit before dark.

The next day, my backside was black and blue, and our team leader thought I should go see the medic. However, I just laughed it off and told him, “I just got my ass black and blue; I’ll be fine in a few days.”

It had been a month since the Chinese May Offensive when we had to walk over mountains of dead Chinese, and North Korean, soldiers. Decomposing with worms, and other kinds of insects crawling in and out of their bodies—especially their spooky eyes.

My muscles from my shoulders to my buttocks were still black and blue, which made it difficult for me to walk and caused me to lose feelings in my fingers. Sgt. Gilliam, twice asked me if it would be better for me to stay back at the tent and rest. Later on, Sgt. Wise told me that Gilliam was afraid if we got into trouble with the Chinese, he would need me and I wouldn’t be in any condition to help.

In July we were working in an area known as the “triangle,” when the Chinese started shelling us with their mortars. Corporal Harold Riech got hit with shrapnel in the mid-section of his back. Sgt. Wise and myself carried him until we reached level ground, then he was able to walk the remaining distance to our jeep. By this time he was bleeding badly, so we needed to find a M.A.S.H. unit. Lucky for us, being surveyors we knew

where the medical units were located. We took Riech to one and dropped him off. The last we heard of him he was evacuated to a hospital in Japan, then sent home.

* * * * *

There were many missions from June thru September—then it turned cold. A tent city was set up when the 45th National Guard, from Oklahoma, and the 40th National Guard, from California arrived in late December. The 40th was to relieve us.

During the last week of December, we sailed from Inchon to Camp Drake, Japan, where we were split up. My unit went to Camp Youngons, in central Japan, where I stayed until I was in a jeep wreck. It was dark and we hit a wall on a busy street. I hit the unarmed turret with my nose, and when the jeep hit the wall I broke my arm. The driver and Master Sergeant, who were riding in the front seat, received small injuries that did not require hospital care. I was taken by ambulance to Sendi, which was a larger city and had an American hospital.

By January my injuries were getting better, so I was transferred to St. Luke's Hospital in Tokyo; I stayed there until late February. From here I went to Letterman Hospital in San Francisco, at the Presidio.

After spending a day here, I was issued a weekend pass and went home across the bay to Oakland.

On April 25, 1952, I was discharged from the U.S. Army.

~~Fifty-Four~~

Marvin Totland

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On December 27, 1950 at the age of twenty, I entered the U.S. Army. I'm from Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

* * * * *

From September 3 through November 7, 1951, I served with Company D, 7th Cavalry Regiment. After being assigned to the mortar section, one of the first men I met was SFC [Delbert] Rice. He was a soft-spoken man and he made sure I met every man in the platoon.

* * * * *

Our entire company was relocating and one evening, around dusk, we were all in line waiting for chow. We were spaced out about five yards apart, in an irregular line. Suddenly, a flight of jets flew over and the last one circled back, apparently to identify us. He circled again and began strafing us; everyone scattered for cover. We had four half-tracks, with quad .50 caliber machine guns. Our CO ordered the crews to fire at the plane. The pilot soon realized he was firing on friendly troops. However, several men were wounded.

* * * * *

It was early morning on the 3rd of October; jump off day for Operation Commando. I was with Sgt. [Delbert] Rice at his duty station, which was located close to the mortars. It was equipped with a telephone for his use. He told me that he had to leave for awhile and for me to answer the phone if

it rang. Sure enough, a call came in from a ranking officer, probably our platoon commander—a second lieutenant.

He wanted to speak to Sarge, so I told him he was away for the moment and would be back shortly. He said, “Get him, now!” I found him at the slit trench—answering the call of nature. The call was from the fire direction center and the conversation probably involved the gun settings to use when the attack began.

The gunners on the mortars never saw their targets—especially in the mountainous terrain of Korea. So, the use of forward observers was essential. They were assigned to front line rifle companies, and placed under their command. The Company commander tells the FO where he wants the shells to land. Then the FO calls in the coordinates to the FDC (fire direct center), who plots them on a map and comes up with elevation readings for the guns. A call was then placed to men, like the sarge and he would shout out the readings, sight settings, the number of mortars to fire, and how many rounds.

Operation Commando was a fierce battle. When our battalion was relieved, and gathered in a clearing for roll call, only three men were left in Charlie Company. Our company lost several FO’s and I was on deck waiting for a jeep to take me to the front lines as a replacement for a FO that had been killed. Fortunately for me, word came down that the battalion was being relieved.

* * * * *

I was an FO on November 6th and 7th during fighting on Hill 200. During a night attack on the seventh, I was wounded; ending the war for me. I was sent to Japan, then on to the States where I was hospitalized at Percy Jones Army Hospital, in Battle Creek, Michigan.

* * * * *

On November 7, 1952, I was discharged from the Army.

~~Fifty-Five~~

David Hughes

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

I graduated from West Point on June 6, 1951.

After the end of World War II, the military began to downsize. The 7th Cavalry Regiment, which was one of the occupational units stationed in Japan at the end of the war, was cut to two battalions. However, you never went to war with only two battalions. So, when the Korean War broke out, the third battalion trained on the ships that carried them to Korea.

During November 1950, I arrived in Korea, and was assigned to K Company, 7th Cavalry Regiment. When I arrived the temperature was thirty degrees below zero.

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On September 1951, we began our journey to take Hill 347, which took fifteen days. Company K consisted of seven officers—including myself—and one-hundred sixty-nine men. Little did we know we would be going up against a full Chinese battalion, roughly six-hundred fifty men. We were supported by the 70th Tank BN, but the hill was so steep that no tank could get to the top. The enemy constantly rained artillery and mortar shells down on us. Company K lost fifteen men, except for me—all officers. We killed two-hundred fifty enemy soldiers, and took another one-hundred ninety-two as prisoners.

* * * * *

The following is an excerpt from a letter that I wrote to Captain John Flynn in February 1952:

...I learned and saw enough since you left to write ten books, all of them different. Personalities rose and fell, battles swelled and diminished, boys became men, and men became memories.

The Regiment fought like a demon for some pieces of ground and suffered incredible casualties defending it. And then, partly because of the casualties, the division was pulled out and replaced. It was time. The 1st Cavalry Division was left only with a smattering of strength...

We soon were relieved on the hill and went back to another part of the regimental front where the 1st Battalion had just been overrun; it was left with a captain as commander and had only 200 men...

...The 1st Cavalry Division had taken a real pounding; it never suffered more casualties in an equal period during its tour in Korea...

The months of September and October of 1951 were the bloodiest months for the 7th Cavalry. All three battalions suffered heavy casualties, but the first battalion suffered the most.

~~*Fifty-Six*~~

Stanley Grogan

68th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron

5th Air Force

U.S. Air Force

I first became involved with the armed forces upon my graduation from Western High School, in Washington D.C, in January 1943, when I joined the Army ROTC at Georgetown University. Later, I was drafted into the U.S. Army and spent time in the 137th Infantry Training BN in Little Rock, Arkansas—I was eighteen years old.

* * * * *

As dawn approached, on one chilly morning, Major Rogers Littlejohn—operations officer—appeared at the Itazuke alert shack dressed in fighting gear; I was his radar observer. The major had already flown fifty missions in the F-82 with First Lieutenant Leo Needham, his radar observer before transferring to jets—the F-94B Starfire.

Suddenly, “Scramble Red, vector 275°” sent us to our jet, “Leaping Lena.”

Rogers snapped the canopy shut as he revved up the engine. We went through our checklist and pulled onto the runway after receiving clearance from the tower. Those living close to the runway had their sleep interrupted by the roar of our afterburners.

After setting our course, an ominous voice from GCI (Ground Control Intercept) said, “Bogey at 11 o’clock, sixteen miles, angels unknown.” Our bogey was near the Straits of Tsushima. Ground control advised us (several minutes later) that “the blips had merged.” However, we couldn’t see the bogey. As we began a 360° turn—for a visual check—Rogers spotted the bird literally “on the deck.” He then told control, “We’ve got it Frogman (control’s call sign), we’re going down to investigate.”

I heard Rogers charge the guns as we crept up on the bogie's tail. I was ready to read range distances for an accurate firing. Easing along the starboard side of his tail, we noticed the British insignia—another ally who did not file a flight plan. Flying alongside the flying boat, at almost a stall, we heard this interesting VHF message: “Why don't ye join us for tea, Yanks?”

We wagged our wings in recognition of their message, then hit the afterburners and headed back to Itazuke.

* * * * *

Suddenly, the loudspeaker blares, “Scramble Blue and Wingman,” sending ground crews, pilots, and their radar observers running. Men climbed into their cockpits, engines started, canopies snapped closed, and the surrounding silence was soon cracked by the roar of afterburners.

As they flew over the fog-shrouded sea, the F-94's were vectored to an approaching bogey, by electronics experts on the ground. When reaching a certain point, the radar observer took over for the final interception of the approaching aircraft.

The weather was no hindrance in making interceptions. There were days when you could see fifteen miles in every direction; then there were days you had to penetrate black thunderheads.

Imagine yourself in the pilot's seat on a misty pre-dawn morning when the “scramble” orders blare over the loudspeaker. A quick check of the weather reveals murky skies with “soup” all the way down to the deck. While looking for your “bogey” at 500mph, you see nothing but fog and scattered patches of water.

After take-off you lose all visual contact with the earth. As you watch your instruments, you receive instructions from the all-seeing radar men on the ground. And as the “bogey” approaches, the radar observer takes over. Now, your attention is divided between instrument flying and listening to your observer; both of you function as a perfectly coordinated team.

* * * * *

During operations briefings, Operational Readiness Inspections always caused a bit of excitement. In one of these gaggles, Captain William Anthony and I were scrambled from Itazuke to intercept a bogey coming in from the north. My radar was working fine, as was my height range indicator, or “C” scan. I locked on to an object and we both noticed the “C” scan would not break lock, so I called “Punch” to Bill, who did not believe the call at first because he couldn’t see anything. A minute or so later, he called “Judy” to GCI, thereby thwarting plans of the ORI team to sneak past us.

* * * * *

During my time at Misawa, I flew in both the F-82G and F-94B, as Radar Intercept Officer; my pilot was First Lieutenant James Albright.

Later, during a night scramble, Albright and his R/O, Lt. Jerry Baldwin, went to check out a passing submarine in the Straits of Tsushima—they disappeared from the radar screen.

* * * * *

My time in Korea was split: my first tour of twenty night missions took place in 1951. My second tour took place in March of 1953, when I flew eleven missions. My first tour was in the F94B all-weather fighter with its six .50 caliber machine guns; the second was in the RB-29A.

During my first tour, I was a Radar Intercept Officer and all missions were flown at night—north of the bomb line. We tried to avoid the area around Pyongyang, with its heavy anti-aircraft guns. I was a Rocket Navigator, during my second tour, with the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron based at Yokota, Japan. All missions were flown at night with leaflet drops, at many points, over North Korea.

My first tour was with the 68th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron. This outfit shot down the first two enemy aircraft of the war, on June 27, 1950.

* * * * *

A “scramble” is a call for a fast take-off to intercept a bogey. Lt. George Aubill and I used to try to get airborne in ninety seconds, from the

call to “wheels up” on take-off. We did this consistently in both training flights, and hot “scrambles” in Japan and Korea.

“Punch” meant you had a radar lock on the bogey and that you were taking over from the ground controlled radar. “Judy” was when you had control and were in the last stage of the intercept.

* * * * *

Close calls were many. One night we were chasing “bed-check Charlie,” a YAK-9 open cockpit biplane that flew over allied positions dropping hand grenades. Our aircraft came close to being caught in cables that the North Koreans placed across valleys.

Another time we were flying in a RB-29A, and I watched as tracers from a .20mm cannon came across the top of our left wing. We were quite a few miles above the 38th parallel.

* * * * *

With the news that forces from North Korea had crossed the 38th parallel, the commander of the 8th Fighter Bomber Wing was alerted to provide a task force to evacuate American dependents and citizens from Seoul. The 68th Fighter Squadron was attached to the 8th Air Force.

Shortly after General MacArthur ordered the evacuation from Seoul to Inchon, four aircraft from the 68th flew to Korea to provide cover for the Norwegian freighter Reinholt, which was evacuating personnel from Seoul. Air support was provided until the ship reached Japanese waters.

Before dawn on the 27th of June, transport planes left Itazuke accompanied by an F-82 escort. Shortly before noon, five North Korean fighters flew over Seoul headed for Kimpo Air Base. At 1150 hours, First Lieutenant William Hudson of the 68th, destroyed a Yak-11—the first aerial victory of the war. The second victory would come moments later as First Lieutenant Charles Moran, also of the 68th, destroyed a LA-7.

* * * * *

I flew my last F-94B mission on March 17, 1952. I requested to be transferred to the 581st Air Resupply Squadron, in the Philippines. The

reason for my request was that I was incapable of using the ejection seat of the radar observer's cockpit without taking my knee caps off on the AN/APG-33 radar box. I commonly referred to this as "the TV set" to the ground crew.

During my full combat tour, I had made arrangements with the pilot to release the canopy—in case of an emergency—then roll the aircraft if conditions allowed him too. This would allow me to kick loose from the cockpit. Fortunately, no emergencies occurred during my tour.

From the 581st, I would transfer to the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron stationed at Yakota, Japan. I flew in the RB-29A as a radar navigator.

~~*Fifty-Seven*~~

Calvin Harwick

9th Infantry Regiment

2nd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was born in Byron, Minnesota on June 5, 1929.

* * * * *

I had been in the National Guard for two-and-a-half years, and was due to be discharged in June of 1951. However, my time was extended for another twelve months because of the war in Korea.

On the 2nd of January, 1951, our division, the 47th Infantry was called to active duty. My company—Company C, 135th Infantry Regiment—left Rochester, Minnesota on the twenty-first by train. It was twenty below zero as we headed to Camp Rucker, Alabama. Here we received more training in firing of weapons, map reading, first aid, and more.

In March, my wife Beverly and I were married. At the end of August, a buddy and I volunteered to go to Korea. After a two week furlough, we shipped out; however, Beverly didn't find out that I had volunteered until I returned home from the war.

After traveling a few days by train from St. Paul, we arrived in Seattle and were taken by trucks to Fort Lewis. Here we went through processing, and a few days later, were taken to Pier 91. It was here that we boarded the troop transport ship, *Simon Buckner*.

We sailed to Japan where we went through more processing, then shipped out to Inchon, South Korea. From here we were taken, by trucks, to HQ CO, 3rd BN, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, and I was assigned as a field wireman. It was around the first of October and truce talks had been going on since July—at Kaesong—with no progress; so, they had been called off.

In the meantime, the 2nd Division was engaged in a battle for a group of hills, which included Hill 931—known as Heartbreak Ridge—south of Mundung-ni. At the end of the battle, around the 20th of October, the division went into reserve for rest—after one-hundred three days of continuous combat—and to bring the division back up to strength. While we were in reserve, Vice-President Alben Barkley presented the division with the President's Unit Citation it had earned in May of 1951, at the battle of the Soyang River.

* * * * *

During the first part of December, we went back on the line to replace the 25th Infantry Division, who was near Chorwon—in the Iron Triangle. The Iron Triangle was marked by the cities of Chorwon, on the west, Pyongyang to the north, and Kumhwah on the east. The triangle was roughly fifty miles north of the 38th parallel and centrally located in Korea.

The communist agreed to resume the truce talks, with the defeat of the North Koreans at Heartbreak. This in turn brought about a break in the fighting during the winter months of 1951-52. We had a kitchen set up and were served hot meals, along with traditional turkey dinners on Thanksgiving and Christmas. On New Years Eve, every available infantry, tank, and artillery opened up, with a tremendous barrage; to wish the communist forces a not too happy New Year.

* * * * *

Some highlights, or experiences, of my tour include one day when we were out checking phone lines, we got caught in a barrage of mortar fire. We immediately took cover in a ditch, where we laid for an hour. Another time we were clearing some old lines when one of our guys hit a tripwire, setting off a mine—slightly wounding one of the guys.

When filling up our canteens, we usually did so from one of the numerous springs that ran down from the hills. Having gone back to one we had used earlier, we found a dead Korean lying in the stream. Needless to say, we never got water from that stream again.

In our last reserve area, we set up our tents in a draw on the hillside. The following morning a Russian MIG flew over, from the backside of the

hill, firing at us. Lucky for us, he overshot our encampment and kept on going. However, it caused all of us to head for the hills.

* * * * *

In April of 1952, the 3rd Battalion went into reserve and after a week or so, we went back on line. It would be my last move. The first sergeant came to me, about a week later, and told me I had one hour to pack up; I was going home—after seven months in Korea.

I was taken by truck to a train station and from there to Inchon. Here we—everyone that was going home—loaded into a landing craft, which took us to a ship that was anchored in the harbor. We sailed to Sasebo, Japan, where we were processed, took a hot shower, and issued new uniforms. After staying here two days, we boarded a ship bound for San Francisco.

Sailing into the city was a beautiful sight; the city on the side of a hill, and the Golden Gate Bridge to the left, which we sailed under.

Finally, I arrived at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, where on May 14, 1952, I was discharged—the same day I arrived at the camp.

~~Fifty-Eight~~

Melbourne Leroy Rogers

7th Cavalry Regiment

1st Cavalry Division

U.S. Army

On March 7, 1951, Fay Gilland and I were married. After spending our six day honeymoon in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, it was time for me to report to Uncle Sam. You see, I had received my orders before we decided to get married.

My oldest brother, Elmer, accompanied Fay and I to the White Star Lines bus station, in Maryville, Tennessee for my sixteen mile journey to the induction center in Knoxville.

At 8:00 AM, the bus pulled out from the station. Upon reaching the induction center, we were instructed to strip off all our clothes and then we were placed in a large, opened room. There we waited our turn to see a doctor. This room reminded me of holding pens for animals.

Around 7:00 PM, we were taken to another large room and ordered to “take one step forward.” We then took the oath that officially made us soldiers in the U.S. Army.

Just before dark, I would take my first train ride as we boarded a slow moving train bound for Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Even though it took all night to cross the Smoky Mountains, the “sand man” never came to my bunk. When we arrived the following morning, there was a little snow on the ground. I would have frozen if not for the wool overcoat loaned to me by my brother, Otha.

“FALL OUT!” rang out early the next morning, to start our processing. Standing in front of me, in the shot line, was Raymond Anderson—a pal from high school. For some reason the line got held up, and Raymond was shot in both arms—twice. We were then assigned to basic training companies. Luckily, I was assigned to Service Company for eight weeks

training because we were chosen to be specialists, in lieu of infantry training.

You guessed it! About the sixth week of basic, our company commander—a World War II paratrooper, and tough as nails—called us to formation, and he told us he had bad news for us. He said our losses in Korea were high and we had been assigned as an infantry company. This meant six more weeks of advanced infantry training.

It would be May before Fay could visit me. Her first visit was when a brother, and his wife, brought her down. Later, she decided to go back with me on a weekend pass, and visit for a few days. However, she had no job yet and I being on a private's pay, money was scarce. So, what do we do? We asked her dad to borrow thirty dollars and away we went. It was around midnight when she dropped me off at the base, and all the lights were out where she had hoped to stay. So, Fay being the brave, young, eighteen year old she was, parked the old '39 Chevy under a moss covered cypress and curled up in the back seat for some sleep until after daylight.

Not far away was a boarding house, owned by a Mrs. Seay. She had a vacancy for a week, but the rent was nine dollars for the whole week! Can you imagine that?

On the 30th of June, I learned through the Red Cross that my paternal grandmother had died. I received permission to go home to be a pallbearer—an honor for this young soldier. When I checked into the barracks, after returning to the base, I was told Service Company was headed for Europe—I started doing cartwheels. However, my excitement would be short lived. The sergeant-on-duty, Corporal Puckett, from Kingsport, Tennessee, told me I would not be going to Europe. I asked him why, and he said because I got to go home. I told him that I had permission through Red Cross to attend my grandmother's funeral. He didn't care. He said, "I'm sending your damn ass to Korea." You guessed it! On September 19, 1951, I set sail for Korea.

I left Seattle, Washington, aboard the *General M. M. Patrick* and didn't know a single person on the ship. A few days out, a trooper jumped overboard. He had told someone that nobody loved him, and he wasn't going to fight for a country he had never heard of! One of the guys in the lifeboat found his fatigue jacket with his dog-tags in a pocket. The ships

chaplain had a brief ceremony at sea, then the captain blew the ships horn and we set sail again.

One of the soldiers aboard the *Patrick*, was Richard “Dick” Salvatore, who was a soloist. His great singing helped shorten a very long, seasickness filled trip for this country hick.

After surviving the edge of a typhoon, a few days out of Fort Lawton, we docked in Yokohama, Japan—fourteen days later. Right away we were processed, and 6600 replacement troops boarded the *General Meigs*, which was 2000 over capacity, bound for Inchon, South Korea.

On the 9th of October, I was assigned to Company G, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

This is an excerpt of a letter I wrote home:

Sunday, October 14, 1951

Hello Folks,

...I am only 4000 yards from the front lines! We’re going up today! This is a pretty bad situation over here...The colonel, Regimental commander, made a speech yesterday to this battalion, which is the 2nd BN...

He said he had seen action in other wars and had seen all kinds of lines, but China had the strongest one an American Army had ever faced! He broke down and cried during this speech and said he prayed for God to bless the brave men who broke this line...

The colonel told us the 7th Regiment had killed or wounded 10,000 Reds in the past 2 weeks...

So long,

Leroy

One night, near the front line, we were assembled after chow. I was told to take two men to the crest of a hill and observe the type of weapons that were fired by the enemy during the night, and report back after

daybreak. Before we left, they told us no one would be there, and if there were—shoot them!

We topped out just before dark and were making our way to the edge nearest the enemy positions. Within ten yards of reaching the trench, up popped three Asians. I quickly pointed my M-1 at the mid-section of one! Then one shouted, “Don’t shoot, don’t shoot! Thailand, Thailand!” And of course, I didn’t shoot; we spent the night with friendly troops.

This is another excerpt from a letter I wrote home:

October 20, 1951

Hello Folks,

...The Chinese are very sneaky. They slipped up on a machine gun squad and killed all five of them in E Company about 2 weeks ago. So we try to be alert as possible. It’s the “scariest” thing I have ever done...

George Company met every morning after breakfast to critique the night before. It was the morning of the twentieth, when our company commander, First Lieutenant Munson, asked what trooper was in a certain location the night before. I can still hear the frightened soldier say, “Me, sir.”

Munson replied, “I’m not being critical son, but where in the world did you get all those hand grenades you threw last night?”

The young soldier said that he had been collecting them every chance he got. He must have thrown dozens due to enemy activity that had been spotted.

It was time to get the password for the night, and because of the activity from the night before, we were told to shoot first and ask questions later.

I guess it was between midnight and 2:00 AM, and we were on full alert. My foxhole buddy, Robert Rogers, and I heard a noise to our front. Suddenly, I saw the image of a person, whom I assumed was an enemy soldier slipping up on us. So, I immediately fired my M-1—once. The

person yelled, “Don’t shoot, it’s Brown.” I put the safety on, and went into a state of shock. Our platoon sergeant, Sgt. Musgrove, jumped down my throat, calling me trigger happy.

Luckily, for Private James Brown the bullet only grazed his chin; luckily for me, I wasn’t court-martialed.

Private Brown was the runner for the first platoon of George Company and he was running an errand when the incident occurred. He apparently had become lost due to the limited visibility, because of the rain and fog. He knew the trail he was on would lead him back to his platoon. I was cleared of any wrong doing.

On the twenty-eighth, Hills 200 and 199 were taken, but not without a battle of great intensity. The 7th Cavalry, along with the 5th Cavalry’s 2nd BN, participated in a two-battalion night attack. This would be one of the largest night attacks executed by the division. They jumped off around 0230 hours and fought desperately, until past noon, when their objectives were finally secured.

During the latter stages of the assault on Hill 200, First Lieutenant Lloyd Burke of the 5th Cavalry’s George Company led a force of thirty-five men against enemy positions that threatened to drive back the battalion. Burke’s action won him the sixth Medal of Honor to be awarded to a member of the 1st Cavalry Division.

Our George Company was waiting the battle out. We were to backup the 5th if they failed. I can still see and hear the fireworks.

It was late in the afternoon when we relieved the 5th, and they were pretty shot up. This one soldier, who was being carried on a litter, told me as I passed him that we wouldn’t last the night on that outpost.

Stan Schaaf, who had earlier transferred from Charlie to Baker Company, was also on this outpost. Later, he would have to go help pickup, and identify, his old buddies from Charlie Company. Apparently, when they finally took the hill, they were so tired they all fell asleep and were stabbed to death in their fart-sacks—sleeping bags.

November finally arrived and Lt. Chico DeVera, a former prisoner of war during World War II, had gone up in a reconnaissance plane to locate the enemy in their newly dug bunkers. This way he would know where we

were to go after dark. Knowing how rumors spread in the military, we had been told that Fox Company had gone on a similar patrol just a few days earlier. And the “Chinks” waited until the patrol was in hand grenade range—wiping out the patrol.

I was assistant squad leader and was responsible for getting the patrol out on time. So, we blackened our faces and prepared to move out. Of course we were all scared out of our wits, because we had a different label for this type of patrol—a suicide patrol. Thank God, the “Chinks” had moved. However, we had to lie there in the cold November weather for four hours before BN Headquarters allowed us to return. We had to convince the gung-ho DeVera, the “Chinks” had heard us and had withdrawn in a valley to set up an ambush for us.

Being the last man in the column, I was ordered not to leave any wounded behind! The first trouble we ran into was one of our own minefields. We were told to do an about-face and try to walk as near the same path out, as we walked in. So, instead of Norbert Vanyo, the point man, being the leader—I was. We didn’t hit any mines.

During Operation Clobber—in November—the 70th Tank BN came up along side us and fired continuously for seventy-two hours at the enemy on the ridges across from us. Can you imagine trying to sleep during this time?

On the 16th of November, I spent my twenty-second birthday peeking out from a dark, cold, filthy bunker overlooking the Chorwon Valley—in North Korea. Later in the day, I would go on patrol stringing barbed wire. The “Chinks” always seemed to know when we were out of our holes, and vulnerable.

This particular day was one of my worst shelling experiences! No one—unless you’ve been there—can imagine the helpless feeling of lying on the ground as shells fell all around, hitting others and wondering if you would be next! I can still smell the smoke from the exploded shells.

When we finally returned to safety in our stinking trench, I told my foxhole buddy—Elmer Van Scoik—how awful it would have been to have been killed on my birthday. Like there would have been a good time to get killed!

Towards the end of November, the 7th Cavalry, along with all elements of the 1st Cavalry Division learned they would be leaving Korea. We were

to be replaced by the 45th Infantry Division.

* * * * *

It was the 18th of December, 1951, and members of the 7th Cavalry packed their gear and headed to Inchon to board a ship headed for Japan. After sailing for four days, we docked at Muroran, Japan, where we were taken to Camp Crawford.

It was snowing like crazy when I started my hour long guard duty on Christmas Eve. However, it was still a pleasant change from Korea. The camps loudspeakers were playing Christmas carols, and I knew at the end of my walk I was going to the base theater where a Japanese choir was singing carols; one stanza in English and one in Japanese.

Since I didn't have enough points to rotate home, in March I transferred to Service Company as a finance clerk. I would return to Korea, but this time to Pusan—not the front lines.

Off the coast of Pusan is Koje-do Island, where the UN had a POW compound. I was sent on TDY (temporary duty) there to correct some pay records. I don't remember how many days it took to get there, but we traveled by a schooner equipped with a small motor. I was accompanied by two "gooks," one sat in front and the other in the back—running the motor. Not knowing if they were friendly or the enemy didn't matter. I was unarmed.

Upon my arrival, I checked into the orderly room and was asked where my weapon was. I told the sergeant that I was unarmed. He replied, "Hell fire. It is a fifty dollar fine to get caught outside the tent unarmed, because of the prison uprising!" So, for the time I was there, he loaned me his .45 pistol and shoulder holster.

While there, everyone had to pull guard one hour a night; supposedly guarding an ammo dump. This particular night was a bright moonlit night and I saw a "second John" approaching my position, but didn't challenge him.

He blurted out, "Who's on guard?"

To which I replied, "Rogers."

When he asked me why I didn't challenge him, I told him I could see his bars at twenty paces; he had just come over from West Point. He then proceeded to ask if I expected to leave Korea alive! I informed him that I had already left once; a year ago, from the front.

Before I knew it, I blurted out, "We don't play that silly stuff over here!"

We were told by our CO, who took us to the front, not to waste our energy saluting.

I never did salute the lieutenant; he could have very easily had me court-martialed, but I took my chances. I guess I was a little cocky.

It was time to return to Pusan and there was a small plane taxiing out for take-off. I ran him down and asked for a lift back to Pusan. "Nope, against military orders," he said.

So, it was back to the dock for another schooner ride.

* * * * *

On March 5, 1953, I finally returned home to my lovely bride, Fay.

* * * * *

Although it has been fifty-seven years, it seems just like yesterday. Some memories we like to remember: some memories we like to forget.

~~Fifty-Nine~~

Mark Pease

7th Infantry Regiment

3rd Infantry Division

U.S. Army

I was on my way to my mother's apartment, in Rochester, New York, after a job interview and I had to stop at the street corner because of a red light. As I waited for the light to change, I noticed an Army Sergeant standing next to a card table with brochures on it. I walked over, looked at the brochures, and on the spur of the moment went inside and enlisted. Two weeks earlier, I had turned eighteen.

* * * * *

I arrived in Korea in March of 1951, and was assigned to Company F, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division.

* * * * *

I remember the month of November 1951 very vividly. We were on Hill 355. It was located near Kowang-San, and our company was one of the few that weren't kicked off the hill. The savage Chinese attack lasted four days, from the twenty-second to the twenty-sixth. Being surrounded and cut off for almost three days, we were running out of everything. We were just holding on until someone could get up the hill and help us. I will always be grateful to the brave men of the 15th Infantry Regiment who fought like hell to get us out of our predicament.

We arrived at Hill 355 not long before the start of the battle. We replaced a British Company, who left several boxes of grenades and C-rations. It was a good thing because we used all of them.

The nights were bitterly cold, with a devastating wind chill. I was wearing GI boxers and undershirt: longjohns, which were two-piece:

fatigue shirt and pants: field jacket and a sweater: winter pants that were suppose to be windproof: winter parka, with a hood: bunny cap, which was a cap with a fur lined bill and ear flaps. We also had winter mittens, which had a slit for your trigger finger. Our boots were leather high-tops, which had a liner in them that you could change if your feet became wet. We kept an extra pair of liners, along with an extra pair of socks, under our armpits—to keep them warm.

With all these layers of clothes, I always seemed to have to go to the latrine at night, in the howling wind. Trying to balance yourself on your heels, with your ass pointed down the hill was quite a task.

During the first days of the attack, we were subjected to the most intense artillery barrage during my year in Korea. My bunker took a direct hit, just moments after my bunker buddy—Barney May—and I got out. The roof of the bunker was well built, but it still collapsed and almost buried Barney alive. He was forced to double over until we could dig him out; he only sustained a strained back.

Noah Knight's bunker was also destroyed, and he laid in a shallow depression. Here he fired continuously on the hoards of Chinese as they came toward us. Having run out of ammo, he noticed three “gooks” trying to infiltrate our lines, with demolition charges. They were going to blow up our lines of barbed wire, making it easier for the ones coming behind them to penetrate our lines. Finally able to get up, Knight rushed towards them and disabled two of them with the butt of his rifle. The third one blew the demo charge, killing the three “gooks” and Noah. He was just twenty-two years old.

Noah Knight was awarded the Medal of Honor—posthumously.

During the time we were surrounded, we ran low on everything; machine gun ammo, mortar shells, grenades, etc... Lucky for us, those boxes of British grenades came in handy—after we learned how to use them. On American grenades the spoons have a space between them and the body of the grenade. However, the spoon on the British grenade rested on the body. And in the cold, the spoon would freeze to the body. We would pull the pin, throw it, and nothing would happen until the sun came up and melted the frozen spoon; then they would explode. We soon learned that we had to pry the spoon after pulling the pin. As if this wasn't a big enough

problem, the frozen ground would contract, setting off the mines we had placed out in front of us.

Since we had missed our Thanksgiving meal, the cooks—back at headquarters—made a big turkey dinner, with all the trimmings, and brought it up to the line. To keep it warm, they brought it in thermal cans. After they had everything set up and ready to serve, it started raining. Even though I tried to shelter my mess kit with my helmet, it filled up with so much rain that my turkey was doing the backstroke. We ate it anyway, because we had something other than C-rations to eat. And because the cooks had worked their asses off to give us a great meal.

I believe it was after Christmas, and maybe just before New Years Eve, when we got off that hill. We used cut up C-ration cans to decorate our bunkers. Someone managed to get a #5 can of condensed milk. So, we ground up some cocoa, which came in our C-rations and looked like hockey pucks, in a few helmets. Then we poured in the milk, mixed in some snow, and stirred until our arms about fell off—we made chocolate ice-cream.

Isn't it strange what one remembers after fifty years?

* * * * *

I left Korea in February of 1952.

~~*Sixty*~~

Paul Elkins

279th Infantry Regiment

45th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

On September 4, 1930, I was born in my paternal grandmother's house in the northwest corner of Chimney Mountain, ten miles south of Muskogee, Oklahoma.

I joined the local National Guard, in Wagoner, Oklahoma, on the 20th of September 1947. The company I was assigned to, Company L, 279th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, was mostly made up of veterans of the Second World War. In August 1948, I went to my first summer camp in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

After graduating from Porter High School, in May 1949, I enrolled at Oklahoma A&M. During the summer of 1950, I was home from college and working on the family farm when the Korean War broke out.

The 45th was notified in early August that it would be called into active service effective on the 1st of September. I chose to enter active service instead of returning to college. In early September our commanding officer, Lt. Cochran, closed the armory and marched us to the train station. The entire town followed us as we marched down Main Street. After saying good-bye to our families, we boarded the train headed for our new home—Camp (now Fort) Polk, Louisiana.

After arriving at Camp Polk we set up a rigorous training program of the cadre force (us) who would train the draftee's when they arrived in November.

In late January, I was selected to attend an Infantry Leadership School in Fort Knox, Kentucky. I was the ranking NCO (Sergeant First Class), so I commanded the troop train to Fort Knox. The training consisted of four weeks of very rigorous training followed by four weeks of basic training of

recruits. During the training I came down with pneumonia and had to wait for the next class to graduate. While at Fort Knox, my division, the 45th Infantry Division, was ordered to Japan to provide the defense of the northern island of Hokkaido. After graduation I received orders to join the division in Japan.

* * * * *

Camp Stoneman, California, was the wildest place I ever saw. Everyone there knew where he was headed and acted accordingly. At this time the company consisted of about seven-hundred men. On the morning of May 25, 1951, we boarded the *MSTS Private Sadao S. Munemori*. In early June after an uneventful voyage, we docked at Yokohama, Japan. We spent a few days at Camp Drake before moving, by train, to the northern island of Hokkaido. Here, we went through rigorous field training until sometime in October, and then we returned to Camp Shimamatsu, which was a tent camp.

On the 19th of September, I was informed that I was about to become a civilian. I told them I wanted to re-enlist, so the next morning I rode forty miles in a pouring rain—in a topless jeep—to re-enlist. In November we moved to a new permanent base, Camp Chitose II, but only for a short time. We received orders in early December to go to Korea.

I left the port of Muroran, Japan, on the 10th of December with an advance party for the 279th. At 0400 hours, I was standing in the snow as I waited to board the *USS Henrico*. We were escorted by a few destroyers, and arrived at Inchon on the 17th of December.

It was late afternoon when we arrived, and we boarded a train bound for the front. At Yong Dong-Po, we crossed the Han River and passed through Seoul. It looked like mostly rubble and tar-paper shacks. The further north we went, the valleys became narrower, and the temperature dropped rapidly. We continued on through Uijongbu, until we reached the “end of the line” at Yonchon. Arriving around 2000 hours, we disembarked and proceeded to the area where the 8th Cavalry Regiment was located.

They were bivouacked on a small hill, and it was very cold and windy. We were escorted to an unheated square tent that had been quickly erected. Its corner stakes had been driven in the frozen ground. We laced up the

corners, trying to stop the wind from coming in. Then we got out our sleeping bags, along with all our clothes and the blankets we could find; we were still cold. Little did I know, it would be spring before I would get warm again.

Before the regiment arrived, we toured the front and became acquainted with the area. Since I was a Sergeant First Class, I was issued an M-2 carbine instead of the M-1 rifle when I left Camp Stoneman. When I arrived in Japan I had to give up my M-2, because it was not my TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment) weapon. While in the 8th Cavalry's area I found a stack of rifles, in the snow, so I laid down my M-1 and picked up an M-2. I carried it until I left Korea.

The regiment arrived, after dark, on the 29th of December 1951. Since the 8th Cavalry wasn't leaving until the following morning, our platoon had to squeeze into a squad tent. Needless to say, it was warm and cozy that night. We stayed here for about two weeks training and getting ready for combat.

Arriving on the front on January 13, 1952, Lieutenant Lamb told me to take two squads and to go find the company outpost, and to stay there until we were relieved. When we left the weather was clear and cold, but when night came it began to snow and had turned miserable. We took one sleeping bag for every two men, so one man had to stay awake on guard—or freeze. Thank God that night was uneventful, but it was an experience to say the least. We had no heat, and our meals were frozen C-rations that had to be chipped out of the can with a bayonet.

The outpost was about three-quarters of a mile in front of the line. We soon became accustomed to the sound of artillery as it passed overhead. The following morning we had a frozen C-ration breakfast and watched as a patrol from the I&R platoon approached the T-Bone complex, in the snow, wearing white uniforms.

* * * * *

In late January 1952, my second platoon went on an ambush patrol near the lower Alligator Jaw. We left after dark, in a heavy snowfall, heading down the jeep road and passing through the "Gate." When we came upon a destroyed village, we realized we had gone too far. So, Lt. Lamb

turned us around, and after retracing our steps for a short distance, we cut across some frozen rice paddies to our objective. After reaching it, the third squad was sent out front about one-hundred yards and the rest of us set up positions at the base of the “lower Alligator Jaw.” It was approaching midnight, and still snowing. Soon, we noticed that some of the men began to doze off. To remedy this, we made snowballs and threw them at the sleeping GI’s—waking them up.

Around 0400 hours, we received a call from Lt. Rogers telling us to return. When we all stood up, we got a surprise. We had been sitting in the same position—in the snow—for about four hours, and the snow had melted only to freeze to the seat of our pants. So, when we stood up, each of us had a large chunk of snow and ice, about the size of a bicycle tire attached to the seat of our pants. We were able to shed our added weight, and return.

* * * * *

On the 24th of January, 1952, around 1100 hours, I received a request for volunteers to take some ammo to Charlie Company; they were engaged in a battle on the T-Bone complex. There was a platoon providing support fire, and they were running low on .30 caliber machine gun ammo. They were located on the alligator jaw, Hill 198—I believe.

I took three men and proceeded to the “Gate” to meet our guide; a sergeant from Charlie Company. Each of us was carrying two boxes of .30 caliber ammo. Having only traveled a half-a-mile, we were about to move into open view of the enemy on the “T.”

We proceeded to our objective, walking at fifteen yard intervals. As we began to approach a trail leading down from the lower alligator jaw, we met a patrol returning from this same area. We should have realized this junction had been zeroed in, but we didn’t. Now as we met the returning patrol, the Chinese had a target they couldn’t turn down—us. As they began to drop mortar fire down on us, we took cover in a ditch beside the road; our guide was just over the bank from me, in a rice paddy. After a few minutes of continuous firing, I asked the guide what he wanted to do. Thinking we would get up and deliver the ammo, he said to throw all the ammo to him and for us to get back to our lines. Since the mortar fire was getting closer, I said, “Agreed.”

Suddenly, a vintage sergeant from the Second World War arrived on the scene and began directing traffic. Listening for the mortars to fire, he would time them and yell for us to “hit the dirt” before they hit. We were able to return to our lines with only one minor casualty; Don Sarrette received a cut on the back of his hand.

* * * * *

In early February we moved off the line to a reserve area. We had only been there one or two days when our second platoon received orders to attack Hill 260, which was part of the T-Bone complex.

To prepare ourselves for this operation, Lt. Rogers, Lt. Lamb, SFC Arians, and myself (MSG Elkins) flew over the area to familiarize ourselves with the terrain. Over the years most of the major details of Operation Dark Baldy have faded. However, this twenty-one year old kid inherited more responsibility that night than he wanted and consequently events of that night have been forever etched in my memory.

On February 6, Company L, under the command of Lt. Clifford Rogers, was assigned the mission of attacking Hill 260. Lt. Lamb’s second platoon was given the assault role, with the first, third, and fourth platoons giving supporting roles. We disembarked from the trucks and formed a column of two’s and headed into “no mans land.”

The second platoon climbed up the steep, ice covered ridge just south of a small knob. After getting orientated, Lt. Lamb gave the order to advance. I monitored SFC Callaway’s third squad, which was on our left, with Arians’ monitoring Sgt. Kimsey’s first squad on the right; the second and fourth squads were in reserve. As we reached the top of the small knob, PFC Rodriguez called out, “Elkins, I’ve got one.”

PFC Patrick followed me as I went to investigate. We reached the hole where Rodriguez was standing, to find a man lying in the bottom. He was a dead GI, apparently from an earlier action. Suddenly, a thunderous explosion blew all three of us through the air into a long narrow trench. While still flying through the air, I shouted “Throw a grenade in the hole,” thinking the man in the hole had caused the explosion. After landing on top of each other, I heard Lt. Lamb call out that he had been wounded. As I ran over to his position, the aid man—Sgt. Culwell—was already attending to

his wounds. The lieutenant had stepped on a mine, losing both legs above the knees. At this time, I assumed command of the platoon.

We had been ordered to wait for Lt. Rogers and Master Sergeant Dorr's first platoon to arrive. Once they arrived (some forty-five minutes later), the second platoon continued its advance, under my command, following Lt. Lamb's original plan. We moved forward about four-to-five-hundred yards, when we came to a place that overlooked the enemy trenches on Baldy, about one-hundred yards away. It was eerie looking—and deathly quiet. There was no cover between us and their trenches, and we knew they were laying in wait.

Before starting the assault, I called in a barrage of artillery fire. I then informed the squad leaders the attack would begin when the artillery support stopped. The first round came in high, and right, of the target. So, I adjusted the fire three or four times then requested fire for effect. One of the three guns must not have been properly setup as some rounds began to drop into my right flank, which caused the first squad to leave their position. As they ran past me, to the rear, I stood up trying to stop them—to no avail. Then the last round came in, killing or wounding sixteen men. I was standing near the point of impact and it momentarily knocked me unconscious. When I came to, I ran to the phone requesting cease-fire.

As I surveyed the area, all I could see were dead and wounded. Only one man from the first platoon had not been killed or wounded; that would change. Sergeant Kimsey, squad leader of the first squad, had severely burned his hand as he removed a burning white phosphorus grenade from the unconscious body of PFC Port.

I asked Kimsey to gather up the walking wounded and take them to the area of the third platoon. Then I deployed the third squad about twenty-five yards forward, to provide protection for Culwell and his litter carriers. Soon orders came to withdraw.

It had been two and a half hours since Lt. Lamb stepped on the land mine and now the forward progress of the second platoon was not stopped by enemy forces, but by friendly fire.

* * * * *

In March 1952, Lt. Hartley became our new platoon leader, and I must say a very good one. Even though he was new to us, and Korea, he was not new to the Army. During the Second World War he had been a platoon leader in the 82nd Airborne, while in France.

We were to move up to the extreme left flank of the division. So, on the last day in reserve I went with the scouting party to check out our new position. Needless to say, I missed the last shower run and it had been two weeks since my last one.

The following day we moved to our new position. The platoon occupied a long ridge that ran down to a two-man listening post, and tied into the 65th Infantry Regiment, which was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division. The third platoon was to our right, with two tanks and a quad .50 dug in on the left half of our platoon. Needless to say, the tanks and quad .50 drew enemy fire like magnets. This gave us a lot of grief. The fire was so heavy, to minimize the effects of shell shock, we had to rotate a few men out of the area.

* * * * *

After meeting our new company commander, Captain Rose, we were ordered to attack Hill 192. Lt. Hartley was the platoon leader, I was the platoon sergeant, and Bob Arians was the assistant platoon sergeant.

The plan called for us to destroy any fortifications that we could and return to our lines. I was to take a support squad up Hill 190, which is south of Hill 192, to cover the attack force on their climb up and down Hill 192. That night we headed up the east side of the ridge that extended out to both hills. At night you were not always able to make out natural landmarks, so we passed our objective.

We were strung out in single file with "Red" Ryan at the point; he liked this job so much that everyone was glad to let him have it. As we passed the base of the Hill 190, we began to sense we had company in the rice paddy to our right. About fifty yards to our front, we could hear the Chinese moving in the grass and making their familiar cat and bird calls. We continued on until Red spotted one about five yards away, crawling in the ditch. He threw a grenade at him.

The lieutenant halted the column, and then he decided we should go back. As we retraced our steps we began to climb Hill 190, still not realizing it was Hill 190. When we reached the top, my squad went to the left and Arians' squad went right. With only about two-thirds of the men in their positions, the Chinese hit us in force. They were well dug-in and began to fire at us with burp guns, and to throw grenades at us. When the attack began, Arians was about five yards away from the Chinese, and I was about fifteen yards to his left.

In the opening moments of the attack, Arians, Red Ryan, and Tex were wounded. Red and Tex were able to make their way back to ridge, but we couldn't find Bob Arians. We called for flares, but we were still unable to find him. Lt. Hartley told me to take two men and go find him. After some time, the lieutenant called us back. Before we left the hill, we called in mortar fire on the valley.

We arrived back at our lines at 0200 hours on the 17th of April, 1952. As I prepared to lie down, First Sergeant Hook called to tell me that a patrol would be leaving at dawn, to try to locate Bob, and they needed a guide—I volunteered to be their guide.

The following morning I had overslept and as I ran to the line, I saw the patrol about two-hundred yards out. The platoon aid man and I ran, catching up with them. By the time Captain Rose spotted Hill 192, we were receiving sporadic small arms fire from our rear. After looking at his map, the captain decided we needed to turn back. On our way back I noticed the spot we were looking for. A captain, from the third platoon that I remember as "Buckshot," and I ran to the top of the ridge, leaving the rest of the guys in the valley. We looked around and saw no sign of life, so reluctantly we decided to leave.

On August 5, 1989, I saw Bob Arians for the first time since the night of the attack. He had been seriously wounded, but survived one-and-a-half years as a prisoner of war.

* * * * *

A few days after our rescue attempt, L Company moved to the ridge that extended up to Old Baldy. Item Company was leaving as we were moving in. The Chinese spotted and unleashed a barrage of 120mm mortar

fire on us. We were located in a small grove of hardwood trees, and we were getting tree bursts as well as direct fire.

We were here for about two weeks and suffered several Chinese night probes, along with a lot of mortar fire. During this time we received several minor casualties—including myself. One evening as the men were beginning to line up in the trenches to eat, I received a call from the company CP to inform us of incoming mortar fire. As I jumped on a trench bank to warn the men, a mortar round hit about fifteen yards away—blowing me into the trench. After I took cover in a bunker, Horace Powell told me that my knee was bleeding.

Several days later I was at the company CP, for a platoon leaders meeting. After the meeting Captain Rose suggested I take his jeep and go get a shower. This would be the first shower I had in sixty days. While there, I also went by the battalion aid station to get my knee attended to.

* * * * *

During the afternoon of April 30, 1952, a heavy fog fell over Old Baldy. So, the 179th Infantry Regiment moved up a day earlier to relieve us. Since May Day was a big Communist holiday everyone expected a Chinese attack, but it never materialized.

The night we moved off the line, I slept on the hard ground instead of in a hole. The following morning we began our two day march to the reserve area. I walked most of the way with a festering knee. However I didn't really care—for I knew I would be going home soon. We spent one night near the 120th Engineer BN, so I visited with my cousin, Dan Morton. Early the next morning we moved out passing through the bombed out town of Yonchon.

That night we arrived on a ridge that overlooked our new reserve area. We moved down the following morning to our new home, a large 16 x 32 feet squad tents. Within a few days word came down that three men, Richard Jones, Charles Hicks, and yours truly, would be rotating home. Before leaving, I was to select a new platoon sergeant. Since Bob Arians was still missing, I chose the next guy in line. He turned it down; I must say I couldn't blame him. So, Lt. Hartley suggested Cpl. Patrick—he accepted. I found out later that he was only seventeen and in three months he would

be a MSG. The next morning I watched as he took “my troops” out, while I stayed in my tent; it was a sad day.

Later that day, we three men went to Yongchon to board a train to begin our journey home. We finally arrived at Yong Dong-Po where we reported to the processing center. Here they doused us with DDT, took all our clothes, and searched our personal belongings for contraband. Next, we hit the showers and were given new clothes.

After a few days we moved to Inchon where we spent our last night in Korea. The following day we boarded a ship bound for Sasebo, Japan. We stayed in Japan for two weeks before boarding a ship headed for the good old U.S.A. We arrived in San Francisco in early June, then on to Camp Stoneman. The camp had changed during the past year—it was no longer the rowdy place it was a year earlier.

Here I boarded a troop train bound for Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where I was discharged in mid-June of 1952.[\[7\]](#)

~~*Sixty-One*~~

Dr. William Latham

1st Marine Regiment

1st Marine Division

U.S. Marine Corps

By the time I was in the sixth grade, I knew what I wanted to be in life—a doctor.

* * * * *

Beginning in July of 1943, I received some of my Pre-Med education at the University of California, Berkely, under the Navy V-12 program. I was then sent to San Leandro Naval Hospital (CA) with six other men, as a corpsman, in late January 1945—until V-J Day. Then we were all assigned to medical schools. Within a week, I was on my way to Louisiana State University Medical School. As a Naval Cadet, I was there until June of 1946, when I transferred to the University of California Medical School, in San Francisco—graduating in 1949.

After completing a years internship, I was in residency when I received a telegram from Western Union in October 1950; the Department of Navy was recalling me to active duty. At first, I was loaned to the Army to open a medical facility at Camp Cook—now Vandenburg Aero-space Station. Six months later, I was transferred to the Naval Receiving Station in Seattle, Washington. On a Friday night, in October 1951, I received orders to report to Camp Pendleton by the following Monday.

While there, we were the second group to have “cold weather training.” We trained at Pickle Meadow, located on the east side of the Sonora Pass—in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. After the first winter in Korea, the Marines were soon aware of the casualties inflicted by the cold. With six weeks of tough, Marine Corps training, we sailed to Korea aboard the troopship *USS William Weigel*.

Approximately two weeks after leaving California, we reached the Korean shore. Once ashore, I had to give up my M-1 for a .45 caliber pistol. Yes; even medical personnel had to carry a weapon in this “Police Action.” I have to say having never seen a .45, within six hours I was very familiar with it.

I was one of ten doctors who went ashore on January 1, 1952. We stopped at Division Headquarters, and drew straws to see who was to stay there—it wasn’t me. We marched on as the battle drew closer, and we doctors were dropped-off at different locations. There were no more straws—I was at the front.

I ended up at a Forward Aid Station and our medical supplies, food and ammo, were flown in by helicopter and carried to our location by South Korean men. Within twelve hours after arriving, I saw my first casualties. We varied anywhere from none to ten (plus everyday illnesses) casualties per day. Due to the extreme cold, approximately zero, the following morning the frozen bodies of three enemy soldiers were found within fifty feet of my bunker.

My job was to triage soldiers, and evaluate them for evacuation. The ones I thought could be saved were taken by helicopter to hospital ships; the others were taken, by ambulance, to M.A.S.H. units. One must realize we were located twenty-five miles in front of the M.A.S.H. units.

My bunker-mate flew a Piper Cub as a forward air-observer. At night he would radio in coordinates for bomb support. Having plenty of corpsman to cover sick call, I asked him if he would like to fly me to Pusan. Here we could go aboard the hospital ship *Repose* to get a hot shower and clean clothes. We only had melted snow, and icy stream water to clean up with. Pusan was roughly two-hundred seventy-five miles due south of our position.

He told me that he wouldn’t be able to get a plane to fly to Pusan. I told him to leave everything to me. The sergeant in charge of the planes asked me for my requisition. Asking what one was, he informed me that I needed a permit from the colonel. I told him I was going for medical supplies; he didn’t care. So, I tried a little bartering—Marine style. I offered to bring him back a fifth of Brandy; soon, we were flying to Pusan.

In the spring, after five months at the front, I was evacuated with the first case of malaria after the rice paddies had thawed out. I spent the next six months, on the west coast; in the area of Inchon.

Being a doctor, I was able to move about and had the use of all modes of transportation. From Ascom City, I frequently flew by helicopter to the hospital ship. Even though I didn't treat any of the patients, I evaluated which patients could be taken to Kimpo Air Base to be evacuated to Japan.

I had heard about a leper colony, so I went to visit. It was an experience from Biblical times. It was located in a small valley surrounded by a fence with iron gates. The patients lived in meager conditions. The amazing part was the UN had supplied them with the latest and best medications for the treatment of leprosy.

Also, when I had free time, I treated children under the care of Sister Philomena at the Star of the Sea Orphanage, in Inchon.

Finally, I would be assigned to the 1st Marine Shore Party BN aboard the *USS Sicily*. The shore party is a support and training unit specifically for high risk units. I am particularly proud of the amphibious and helicopter landing sequences we practiced. The dates we were training reserve units of the 1st Marine Division landing combat troops by helicopters is missing from military history.

After spending eleven months in Korea, I returned home and set up a family practice. My only ties to Korea after returning home, was with Sister Philomena and her children. For about five years, captains of ships docking in the Port of Stockton would visit my office on behalf of the Sister. I would send her boxes of pediatric medical supplies—mostly samples from salesmen.

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As a guest of the Korean military, which sponsors visits by forty Korean War Veterans three times a year, I returned to Korea in 1996.

~~*Sixty-Two*~~

Roger Lueckenhoff

160th Infantry Regiment

40th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

One month after the beginning of the Korean War, I received my draft notice. After being inducted in the Army, I was assigned to Company A, 160th Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division—a California National Guard Division that would be federalized on September 1, 1951.

In April of 1951, upon completion of basic and advance training, the division left for Japan. After landing in Tokyo, the 160th was transported by train to Camp Haugen, which was located at Hachinohe on the east coast of northern Honshu. We spent the next three months training, which included amphibious training. It also included an eighty-two mile march to the northern tip of Honshu.

We left camp on a Sunday morning, arriving at the northern tip of Honshu—three to four days later. This was in the heat of the summer (late June or early July). The objective was to average twenty miles per day, with a five-to-ten minute break every hour. We carried a full field pack, an M-1 rifle, and one canteen of water. There was no riding in vehicles unless you couldn't walk because of multiple blisters on your feet, or if you fainted. We were issued water purification tablets to use in case we refilled our canteens with contaminated water from a rice paddy. In Japan they used human waste as fertilizer, so the prospect of any surface or underground water being contaminated was likely.

I recall the first morning of our march that some Japanese youngsters were riding bicycles down the middle of our column—selling Popsicles. With the potential of being contaminated, an order came down prohibiting the purchase of Popsicles.

I don't remember exactly how long it took to complete the march, but it was a bit longer than three days, but less than four.

We were transported by truck to Camp McNair a temporary "tent" camp located on the slopes of Mt. Fuji. During our three months here, we went through basic and advanced training for the second time. It was not a required training exercise to climb Mt. Fuji, but one weekend (in August) many of us climbed to the crater—12,400 feet above sea level. Also, during August, typhoon Ruth hit the camp blowing away all the squad tents we slept in.

In October, we moved to Camp Zama, which was located near Atsugi Naval Base. Here we trained aboard C-119 transport planes. While we were here a major fire destroyed seven barracks; we were fortunate not to have lost any lives, only equipment. For ski training we were scheduled to return to Mt. Fuji. However that was canceled on December 22, 1951, when we received word that the 40th was shipping to Korea; we did not consider this news to be a Christmas gift.

On January 7, 1952, my unit, the 160th RCT (Regimental Combat Team) was the first unit of the 40th to go to Korea. Having boarded a ship at Yokohama, we landed at Inchon on the 11th of January. The mercury was dipping to fifteen below zero. We were transported by train to an area just behind the front lines. On the nineteenth we took our position on the front line, replacing the 19th Infantry Regiment of the 24th Division. The line was located at the central front of the Iron Triangle area in North Korea. We were in the mountains of the eastern leg of the triangle near Kumhwa.

The first day on line, my company sent out a ten man patrol and a buddy of mine, SFC Loren Knepp, who was leading the patrol, was shot in the leg. He was the first Purple Heart recipient of the 40th Division. The following day, SFC Kenneth Kaiser, who was with Baker Company and on our left flank, was killed in action by a mortar round. He would be the first loss of life of the 40th.

On the 28th on January, the 223rd Regiment (of the 40th) took up positions west of the 5th RCT, which was on our left flank. The 5th would be replaced on the 3rd of February by another regiment of the 40th, the 224th. Over the next couple of months we engaged the Chinese; mainly in patrol type action along the MLR.

During this time, we experienced temperatures as cold as twenty below zero and not having been furnished proper gear, frostbite became a problem. On the 1st of April, the 40th was replaced by an ROK Division and we moved to our new position overlooking the Kumsong River valley—still in the Iron Triangle. Here too, we engaged the Chinese in patrol type action until late June, at which time we were replaced by an ROK unit. We then moved to a reserve area at Kapyong.

While there, our regiment observed the ruins of a city that earlier in the war had been occupied by the North Koreans. Thousands of the cities residents died from starvation, disease, or the bitter cold, as they fled south. We soldiers couldn't help but notice the plight of the children, who had been without a schoolhouse for two years. Building them a new school became a division project. In just one payday, over \$17,000 was contributed by guys of our unit.

Our engineer battalion, along with Korean civilians, built a new ten classroom high school on eight donated acres. The school was named for the first soldier of the 40th to have been killed—SFC Kenneth Kaiser. The school is still in existence today.

While at Kapyong, I accumulated enough points to rotate home. I left Korea in late August 1952.

~~Sixty-Three~~

Dick Thune

A Battery

300th Armored FA BN

U.S. Army

My father was with the 6th Engineers (now the 10th Engineers), of the 3rd Infantry Division, in the First World War. He strongly advised me to “let them draft you” and to this day, I believe that was very good advice. So, in early 1951, at the age of twenty-one, I was drafted from my hometown of Kenyon, Minnesota. Before I was sworn in, I learned that the Marine Corps was taking every odd number man on the roster—I had an even number.

I took my basic training at Camp Chaffee, then I went to Fort Sill for Advanced Artillery Training. It was here that we were informed that everyone was going to Korea. So, to help delay the inevitable, I applied for Leadership School. After completing artillery training, I was accepted to the school, and all the other draftees were sent to Alaska. Guess where I went upon completing Leadership School? Korea!

* * * * *

Arriving in Korea in April 1952, I was assigned to A Battery, 300th Armored FA BN; I was on the number three gun. An artillery battalion consists of three batteries, each with six guns. During my time in Korea, I was a cannoneer, gunner, and Chief of Howitzer section on a 105mm M-7 self-propelled artillery piece. The M-7 was built on an M-4 tank chassis, but minus the turret and heavy armor. It was equipped with a 650hp, nine cylinder radial engine.

The 105mm had a range of approximately 6.9 miles.

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During the middle of May, there was a lot of ground and air action. The FO team for A Battery was literally blown off Hill 710, and had to be quickly replaced. We were firing a lot of flak suppression missions, as UN planes were seeking out targets in front of our battalion. One of those missions was being flown by four Marine, or Navy, F-4u Corsairs, which we watched as they dove on their targets. After they had made several passes, they climbed to a higher altitude. Then suddenly, one of them dove down making a high speed flyover on one of the targets; probably a photo reconnaissance. The pilot pulled up at a sharp angle, and when he passed over A Battery, we heard what sounded like an AAA gun. I was watching the Corsair when a round exploded underneath its engine and it began to smoke.

The pilot banked to the right, looking for a place to crash. He then disappeared over the ridge to our left front. The remaining Corsairs made strafing runs to keep the Chinese from capturing their downed buddy. From our battery area we couldn't see what was happening, but we sure could hear it. Within minutes we received a fire mission. I was on the phone with the FDC and he was advising us of our target, and I had to be sure all the bubbles were level.

As the Corsair's pulled up, and passed overhead, one of them still had a bomb hanging from its shackle—we kept our eye on that one. Once they were out of the area, we fired continuously until a rescue helicopter arrived. They were able to get the pilot out safely.

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In July we moved back to the rear. During one very hot, humid night we were issued a red alert, which meant an unidentified aircraft was in the area. It was pitch black, as there was no moon. Suddenly, we heard what sounded like a misfiring Briggs and Stratton engine, as it passed overhead going west to east. The sound stopped and it became deathly quiet. While it was over us, I swear I could have heard what sounded like the propeller of a small plane. Then the whole valley glowed with a white light that appeared to have come from about a dozen parachute flares. Luckily for us, nothing came from this, but it definitely got everyone's attention.

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When we moved to our winter position in 1952, we positioned all eighteen guns in an “s” shaped valley along the Kumsong River. As I remember, HQ and HQ Service Battery were located at the bottom of the curve. Across the river, to the front and right of HQ, was a large, sandy cream colored spot where the Chinese had set up their artillery. One day after we had finished lunch, we received a red alert.

At the end of World War II, I was a fifteen year old kid, who like many other kids knew airplanes and how they sounded. We were all on the .50's when we heard the sound of Rolls Royce-Merlin engines, which only meant one thing—F-51 Mustangs. There were four of them, with South Korean markings, coming up the river at a very low altitude. They must have been only one-hundred feet up when they passed overhead. All of us on the guns waved at the pilots, and they returned our waves.

After they flew over, they pulled up and began their attack. I believe it was on the railhead at Kumsong, which was located roughly a couple thousand yards to our northwest.

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While at this same location, we received another red alert. We noticed two vapor trails heading south. One appeared to be darker in color than the other. We had been informed that a MIG produced a darker vapor trail than our planes. It looked like a MIG was being chased by one of ours. Suddenly, both planes dove straight down.

The gunner on four and myself, were watching the chase through our binoculars. We saw the end of the vapor trail right above the ridge line. And without time to blink our eyes, a MIG-15 being chased by an F-86 streaked over our heads. They soon disappeared over the ridge. I never knew if our plane caught him or not.

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In May of 1953, I rotated home.

~~*Sixty-Four*~~

Kenneth Whitehouse

552nd Military Police Company

U.S. Army

I was born in East Chicago, Indiana, on June 17, 1929. When I was very young, my family moved to the small community of Ralphs near Deanefield, Kentucky.

On the 8th of February, 1951, I was drafted. I was sent to Fort Lewis, Washington for my basic training. After basic I would be shipped to Korea, where I arrived in early 1952. I was to be assigned to the 40th Infantry Division. However, six of us were pulled aside and given new orders. We were to report to the 522nd M.P. Company located on Koje-do Island, where the Chinese and North Korean Prisoners of War were housed.

When we arrived, it was the most eerie feeling I have ever had. Just before our arrival, General Dodd, the camp commander had been captured by some of the rioting prisoners, and the whole island seemed to be on fire. Anything that could burn was burning. Every compound (I believe there were eight) was flying communists flags and had signs tacked on poles, and the inmates were singing communist songs. It was very unnerving. They sang twenty-four hours a day, in the hopes of keeping us from getting any sleep, or rest.

Those who had captured the General soon charged him with abuse of prisoners, and placed him on trial; they found him guilty. After getting as many concessions as they thought they could get, they released Dodd—unharmd.

Shortly after our arrival, Brigadier General Haydon Boatner was appointed the new commander of Koje-do. A few days after the release of General Dodd, things changed. Boatner ordered two tanks, along with the 38th Infantry Regiment, to smash through the barbed wire fences and gates of all the compounds. They leveled all the poles, so there went all their communist flags. The infantrymen used flamethrowers to burn all their

signs. He told the prisoners they could make all the noise they wanted to between the hours of 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM, then there would be complete silence. He wanted to be able to hear a pin drop. I thought he was going to have a hard time pulling this one off, but to my amazement he did.

He wore two pearl handled pistols, and when he spoke—you listened.

* * * * *

There were a lot of civilians living on the island when I first arrived, and they were always keeping the prisoners (both Chinese and North Koreans) stirred up. You never knew if someone milling around the hillside was a local or an escaped prisoner. However, after Boatner was able to get things under control, a lot of the civilians were evacuated from the island.

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The M.P.'s pulled six hour shifts at the guardhouses located at each of the compounds gates. However, the infantrymen pulled two on and four off as they guarded the perimeters of the compounds. Most of the infantrymen had spent time on the front lines, and those who weren't able to rotate home, ended up back on the front lines. We also watched or guarded the prisoners on work details.

During my time on Kojedo, I would carry a carbine, a .45 automatic pistol, and an M-1 with a bayonet.

* * * * *

The communist would kill the ones that turned against them (anti-communist) and bury them in their compounds. There was one anti-communist prisoner in one of the compounds, and I knew they were going to kill him if they caught him. So, I had him come out of the compound and kneel on the ground with his hands behind his head. I then called for the sergeant to tell him what was happening. He took the prisoner, and after that I didn't know what happened to him.

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I was discharged from the Army on January 24, 1953, at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky.

BOOK III

July 1952 thru July 1953

~~*Sixty-Five*~~

John Delaney

USS Missouri – BB-63

U.S. Navy

In 1952 the Korean War was still going hot and heavy, so during my junior year at Watervliet High School—in Watervliet, New York—I decided to quit school and join the Navy. In April at the age of seventeen, weighing one-hundred fourteen pounds and standing five feet tall, I enlisted.

I was sent to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, just outside of Chicago, for my basic training. Having been raised at an orphanage, being away from home wasn't a problem; you can't get homesick if you don't have a home. However, some of the other guys really became homesick.

After graduating from our eight weeks of basic, we received our orders for the different ships and commands we would be assigned to for the next several years. I was excited when I received my orders—the *USS Missouri BB-63*.

It was during the middle of June when I reported to the *Missouri*. I was assigned to the Engineering Department and R-Division, which was responsible for the watertight integrity of the ship. Along with firefighting, we were in charge of the carpenter shop, and the machine shops, which included plumbing, and all the damage control facilities. My duties would include standing watches in Damage Control Central, sounding of the bilges (checking for water), air testing of compartments, and being the hot suit (asbestos suit) for air operations of the helicopters.

When I boarded the ship she was in her home port at the Naval Base in Norfolk, Virginia. Then she was in dry dock at the Naval Yard in Portsmouth, Virginia. After being assigned to a berthing compartment, it was time to learn the ships routine, and to find my way around the maze of compartments. At this time, she had about 2800 men aboard, and even trying to find the chow line was an experience.

After being aboard for a few days, I was working with one of the Petty Officers. We performed an inspection of the shaft alleys, which are located at the heart of the bottom of the hull. The alleys contained the actual shafts. There were four on the *Missouri* and they held the propellers. This required us to work in such a confined area that we had to crawl through passageways that were extremely tight. After this, we had to go to the bottom of the dry dock and visually inspect the shafts themselves. There was this massive battleship, weighing some 58,000 tons, sitting on concrete piers, and we had to walk underneath it. Talk about giving you the creeps! The only thought that goes through your mind, is, “Don’t slip off now.”

Finally, she was out of dry dock and we were headed to Cuba for training, and to check out any new equipment that had been installed while we were in port. The trip would give us new crew members a chance to learn, and become part of the team. We also had gunnery practice and every other drill known to man—at all hours of the day and night.

In early September we returned to Norfolk to replenish our fuel, ammunition, and food, to begin our voyage to the west coast. As we passed through the Panama Canal we only had about four inches of clearance on each side of the ship—what an experience. She eased through the gates and entered Gatun Lake, which is the freshwater lake that feeds the locks. The freshwater is helpful to a ship; it causes the barnacles that are attached to the hull to die and fall off. This in turn provides a smoother bottom and the ship will glide through the seas with less effort.

After a short stay in Long Beach, California, we headed for Pearl Harbor. Here we stayed a few days and replenished our supplies for our trip to Japan. While here we were able to visit the site of the *USS Arizona*, and what remained of her above the waters surface.

We were now headed for Japan to relieve the *USS Iowa*, another battleship that had just spent six months off the coast of Korea. Our trip to Japan was uneventful.

During our time in Korea we operated on both coasts supporting the ground troops, by shelling targets that had been defined by Task Force 77 and the 7th Fleet. When operating with the task force, we watched as carriers launched their aircraft with the destroyers following as plane guards. If a plane went down in the water, the destroyer would be there to

rescue the pilot. On numerous occasions we provided escort for the carriers and destroyers.

We managed to be in port on Christmas Day, of 1952. However, we were back on the firing line on New Years Eve as 1953 arrived.

Being assigned to flight crew from October 1952 through April 1953, we would standby for helicopter operations during its take-off and landing; the *Missouri* carried one helicopter. The copter was our eyes, and did spotting missions to direct the guns to their targets.

I had the chance to see many of her visitors as they came aboard during this time. Men like Sygman Rhee of Korea, and Cardinal Spellman of the United States, who brought packs of cigarettes with him. I kept my pack for many years, but somehow lost it when the Navy moved me to another command. The helicopters were arriving fast, and when the men disembarked the stars of their collars were too many to count; they sure didn't come for a cup of coffee. These men included Generals Van Fleet (Army), Barcus (Air Force), Pollack (Marines), and Admiral Clifford of the Royal Navy.

Korea was one of the coldest places I was ever assigned to. Even the sea water froze to the deck, making it very slippery.

While we were the flagship for the 7th Fleet, and Task Force 77, our crew grew to nearly 3200 men. During our tour to Korea, we lost four crew members. Our Commanding Officer, Captain W.R. Edsall—suffered a heart attack and died on the bridge. First Lieutenant's Robert Dern and Rex Ellison, of the Marine Corps, and Ensign Robert Mayhew died while on a helicopter spotting mission off the coast of Korea. The loss of these three men was a turning point in my life. I boarded the *Missouri* as a kid—now life was no longer a game. This was serious business and no place for a kid. Time had come for me to grow up, and become a man.

I departed Korea in April of 1953. However, I served in the Navy for another twenty years, retiring in 1971 as a Chief Petty Officer. During my tenure I served aboard the *Lexington*, *Oriskany*, *Geiger*, and *Barry*.

~~*Sixty-Six*~~

Robert Bickmeyer

Signal Company

7th Infantry Division

U.S. Army

As the 7th Infantry Division was making the Inchon Landing on September 15, 1950, I was employed at General Motors—waiting to be drafted. When confronted with something distasteful I tend to deal with it quickly, so I can put it behind me. For example, when eating dinner I eat my vegetables first, and then I enjoy the meat and potatoes. So, I called the local draft board and volunteered to be drafted. They advised me they could not call me until my number came up, which it did in February of 1951.

I soon boarded a train loaded with draftees, and some enlistees, headed to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. The 31st Infantry Division, known as the “Dixie Division,” was a National Guard unit from Mississippi and Alabama that had just been activated. It was being reinforced with recruits from New York, Oklahoma, Texas, and elsewhere.

I was assigned to M Company, which was a heavy weapons company that consisted of three platoons—machine gun, mortar, and 75mm recoilless rifle. We were given our choice of platoons, so I chose the machine gun. I could see myself mowing down North Korean and Chinese “commies” as they attacked in waves. I was young, but not bright.

During the first roll call of our platoon, when our last names were called out, one recruit named “Dallas” responded with a loud “Yo.” The platoon sergeant asked him if he had any relatives in Texas.

Dallas replied, “Maybe. We’re like horse shit; we’re all over the place.”

The serious sergeant, who was a veteran of the Second World War, laughed along with the rest of the platoon. Needless to say, Dallas wasn’t his real name; I changed it for obvious reasons.

The platoon was made up of four squads, with twelve men per squad. Our home was a square tent, and our street was lined with twelve tents. There was a guy—Geno—in our squad who played a harmonica. After a long day of training, we were soothed by Geno and his harmonica as we laid on our bunks at night. His favorite song was “Harbor Lights.”

During training, Dallas, who had become a close buddy, decided he was going to finagle his way into a medical discharge. He was a physical specimen that everyone admired; he was very health conscious and an avid weight lifter. Being an excellent soldier and welled like, he complained about the Army more than anyone. We were on night maneuvers and had bedded down for the night on some pine needles, when he whispered, “This is it Bob. I’m gonna go bananas. The CO is here, the platoon leader, and our sergeant.” Suddenly, he jumped to his feet and let out a blood-curdling scream of agony, mingled with cries of a severe headache. They loaded him into a jeep and took him to the medics.

I easily slept through the night having marched along dirt roads all day. The next morning Dallas returned to our squad explaining, “They insisted my headache was nothing serious. It was caused by inhaling dust all day long during our forced march.”

We ended our basic training with a few weeks of maneuvers at Fort Bragg, where we spent each week in a pretend war against “aggressors” who were seasoned GI’s trained to be the enemy. During our last week, Dallas, “Frankie,” and I were assigned a machine gun. We were instructed to dig a U-shaped trench, placing our gun inside the U at shoulder height. This allowed us to fire at the aggressors in front of us, and to our left and right. We were to have someone awake, and alert, at all times. Unfortunately, when Frankie was on duty, the company commander made his rounds checking all positions. He found all three of us asleep. It was war time, and you guessed it! At the end of our maneuvers, all three of us were put on a list—to Korea.

After a ten day furlough we reported to Fort Lewis, Washington. A rumor was going around that we were going to be flown to Korea the following day, because there was a dire need for infantrymen. We sneaked out of camp for one last night on the town. Dallas and Frankie had decided they weren’t going to Korea, especially at the beginning of winter. We went to a men’s clothing store where they bought civilian clothes, then they went

to the bus station where they purchased tickets to California. Alone, I went back to Fort Lewis—having lost all respect for my two buddies.

The rumor was just that—a rumor. Two weeks later, I and many others, boarded a troop ship for a two week voyage to Yokohama, Japan. Here I was sent to Eta Jima Specialist School, which was formerly the “Annapolis of Japan.” Here I was converted from a machine gunner to a radio operator; my mother’s prayers had been answered.

After twenty weeks of radio school, I arrived in Korea in early June of 1952. I was assigned to Signal Company, 7th Infantry Division, where I was assigned to a three man radio team, which had the responsibility of maintaining radio contact 24/7. We rotated shifts so someone was on the radio at all times. Our team chief had rotated stateside, so I was designated team chief, which normally called for the rank of sergeant. However, ranks were frozen and I never received the three stripes.

Summer in Korea was hot, but bearable. The winter was almost unbearable, especially sleeping in an unheated tent with the mercury dipping to seven below zero. We were each given a sleeping bag, along with six blankets. I folded three of them in half and placed them on my cot, and I covered up with the other three. For added warmth, we slept with our fatigues and boots on. Admittedly, sleeping in these conditions was the most heroic thing I did in Korea—I saw no combat.

In order to arrive back in the States by February 1953, for my discharge, I left on New Years Day; leaving behind my teammates, Jim Curry from Kansas, and Tony Rizzuto from Louisiana. I arrived in Inchon to wait for a troop ship headed for Sasebo, Japan. While here I attended a USO show starring Debbie Reynolds and Carlton Carpenter. All the benches were full, so I boldly walked to the front and sat on the ground. Only a few feet in front of me, I watched Debbie as she sang and danced. Every GI there, I am sure, fell in love with her—I know I did.

Many of us were on deck as our ship sailed into San Francisco during the darkness of early morning. We first saw the harbor lights, then coming into our view was the Golden Gate Bridge. As we sailed under the bridge, I began to reminisce about Geno—my buddy back in the Dixie Division—playing “Harbor Lights” on his harmonica. At that time, it was the happiest moment of my life.

I was discharged at Fort Dix, New Jersey, one month after leaving my radio team.

~~~*Sixty-Seven*~~~

**Peter Beauchamp**

*1st Marine Regiment*

*1st Marine Division*

*U.S. Marine Corps*

I was a sixteen year old high school student living in the South Bronx, which was a ghetto. One of my teachers was a major in the Marine Corps Reserves. He told us that in the reserves you get uniforms, get to go to a paid meeting once a month, and during the summer school break you went to camp for two weeks of training; that sounded good to me. In April 1950, I turned seventeen and my parents signed for me to enlist in May—the Korean War broke out in June.

The first two weeks of July, our 1st Infantry Reserve Battalion went to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina for training. In August, while still on summer break, our reserve battalion was activated. We went back to Camp Lejeune, where the battalion was split up, sending the reserves to different duty stations to relieve the regular Marines that were going to Korea. Along with twenty others, I was sent to the Marine barracks at the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, for guard duty.

On the 5th of June, 1951, while at Quonset Point, I re-enlisted in the Regular Marine Corps—and volunteered to go to Korea. On the 1st of July, I arrived at Camp Pendleton, California, for advanced infantry training.

I departed San Diego on October 16, 1951, aboard the *USS Noble*, and arrived in Kobe, Japan on the 2nd of November. Two days later, I was headed to Korea where I arrived at Socho-Ko-Ri on the 6th of November.

\* \* \* \* \*

As a corporal in the second squad, first platoon of G Company, 3rd BN, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, around September 7, 1952 it was our turn to occupy Outpost Bunker Hill.

First squad was on the extreme right flank of Outpost Bunker Hill, almost within hand grenade range of the closest Chinese trench. The second was to their left, with the third squad to our left. Behind Bunker Hill was Hill 229, where our company had located its mortars.

Bunker Hill reminded me of a garbage dump. It was littered with stretchers, empty C-ration cans and boxes, barbed wire and communication wire as well as Chinese bodies—still armed with rifles and Bangalore torpedoes; and the wounded. The wounded were usually evacuated during the night, because it was almost impossible to move about in daylight, without attracting incoming mortar fire.

Our sleeping bunkers, which were located on the reverse side of the hill, were very small. The one I shared with three other guys was approximately three feet high, four feet wide and five-or-six feet deep. When all four of us were in it during the day, you had to sit scrunched up and try to get some shut-eye. At night when we were on 50 percent watch, it was easier to sleep with only two of us in the bunker; that is if you could sleep with mortars, artillery, and gun fire going on during most of the night.

On the forward slope was where our fighting holes—foxholes—were located. The hole I shared with another Marine was equipped with a sound powered phone that I used to call in artillery on Chinese positions. They were about one-hundred yards to our front.

Every now and then, a Chinese soldier would pop up and spray our area with burp gun fire. Their mortar tubes were so close, I could see the flashes when they fired. The flashes were coming from three different tubes; they must have been in fixed positions. Based on which of the three that fired, I could pretty much tell where the round was going to hit.

I called in artillery to knock out their mortars and when the first round hit, it shook the whole area. I asked the guys on the other end of the phone, “What the hell was that?” Expecting to hear that it was a 16 inch shell from a battleship, instead I was told that it was an 8 inch shell from an Army Artillery Battery. (The Marines didn’t have 8 inch artillery in Korea). The shells were hitting beyond the Chinese positions. I called back to give corrections and they dropped the range, but not enough. Finally, they told me that they couldn’t drop the range any further without hitting our

position. Even though I wasn't able to knock out those three mortars, I'm sure I must have gotten several Chinese soldiers with those 8 inch shells.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the 4th of October, 1952 I left Inchon aboard the *USNS Marine Serpent*—bound for home. I arrived in San Francisco on the twenty-first.

I was stationed at Camp Lejeune, as a sergeant, until I was discharged on June 4, 1955. I then returned home to the South Bronx.

## ~~*Sixty-Eight*~~

**Ronald Hale**

*1st Marine Regiment*

*1st Marine Division*

*U.S. Marine Corps*

My younger brother, Avery, and I joined the U.S. Marine Corps on December 17, 1950, making us the first Marines in the family. We had sixteen brothers and sisters, and lived in El Paso, Texas, which was home to an Army and Air Force Base.

Our brother James was in the Second World War, along with brothers John and Donald, who were also in Korea. Amory joined the Air Force and was stationed in England during the Korean War. Our younger brother, Richard, joined the Marines during the Vietnam War; where he lost an arm.

\* \* \* \* \*

I arrived in Korea during October of 1952, where I was assigned to Item Company, 3rd BN, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. I was a corporal in the third platoon.

When I joined the company they were on the MLR. It wasn't bad there, except when they shot mortars at us. I would yell "incoming," and everyone would take cover.

It was extremely cold there, and I had just left Pearl Harbor where it was warm all the time. Sometimes I wished I was in Hell, so I could warm up. Come to think of it, I was in Hell. We would wrap paper, or plastic, around our uniforms to help keep our body heat in—this was our cold weather gear.

\* \* \* \* \*

In March of 1953, we were sent to Outpost Dagmar. Our first day there we set up, then later the next day all hell broke loose; we fought all through

the night. They came over the top of the hill, and were able to get into our trenches; we now had to fight hand-to-hand combat, and I had fired my M-1 rifle until it wouldn't fire any more. A "gook" came at me and I had to use my bayonet on him. To this day I don't know why, but for some reason I was unable to pull the bayonet out of his body. Finally, I just had to release it from my rifle.

We were able to run them out of the trenches and off the hill, with the help of V.T. This is where an artillery shell detonates in the air about twenty-to-forty feet above the ground, scattering shrapnel in a wide area. After the shelling it had become deathly quiet, as if I had gone deaf.

I thought I was the only one left living on Dagmar. I wanted to get off the hill, but there may have been wounded men that needed my help. As I crawled around the hill, I noticed movement in one of the bunkers and I thought it was a "gook." After having pulled the pin from a hand grenade, I wondered if it was one of us. So, I yelled, "Friend or foe?" A voice yelled back, "Hale, is that you?" I sure was glad to hear Harvey Harriott's voice; he was my fire team leader.

Continuing on around the hill, I came upon a machine gun nest and all the Marines looked to be dead. As we moved on, I saw a hand move and told Harriott one was still alive. We dug him out, then the three of us headed for the CP. Our leader, Lt. John Peeler, was a fantastic Marine, and fighter.

By now it was beginning to get daylight, so we went back to look for any wounded or dead. Only four or five men had not been wounded, so the corpsman got busy taking care of the rest. We were lucky to have found a few of our dead. Apparently I had been wounded when a grenade went off between my legs. Thank God I was lying on the ground, and I was skinny; most of the shrapnel went over me.

We placed our dead in a row and the dead "gooks" in a pile, so when night came and we were relieved, we could easily take our dead with us. We were pretty sure the "gooks" wouldn't be back that night, for they had lost too many. Lt. Peeler couldn't believe we had killed so many. Our replacements arrived right at dusk.

Our replacements were our company's second platoon. Except for me, what was left of our platoon was able to go back to the MLR. I had to stay

behind to show the second platoon their firing positions. Since I had stayed awake all day, it had been at least thirty-six hours since I had been to sleep.

When dusk arrived, I went to my firing position and fell asleep. Suddenly, the “gooks” were all over the hill and had gotten into our trenches. When I woke up, I found myself being carried by some Marines. I asked them, “What’s going on?” They thought I was dead and they were going to put me with the other dead.

A patrol came by the hill, so I went back with them to rejoin my platoon. From here we went to another hill, Outpost 2 (OP2), at Panmunjom—where the peace talks were being held. On one side of the hill we could shoot the enemy, but they couldn’t shoot back. However, the opposite held true for the other side of the hill. The reason for this; it was a death penalty offense to shoot toward the peace talks.

We really enjoyed being at OP2. The “gooks” would bring us gifts and leave notes behind asking us to surrender. They said we would be treated very well, and would not die, that we would be able to see our loved ones when the war was over. Yeah, right!

After about a month, we left OP2 and went into reserve where we stayed for ninety days. Some of the men even received three days of R&R in Japan—lucky guys.

The CO wanted a squad of men to go outside of the fence line, to clean up the area. I said my men would do it. After we got outside, and no one else was around, I let the men go to a Korean village while I stayed behind. Roughly two hours had passed and the CO came by, and wanted to know where the men were—I pointed towards the village. He instructed me to get them inside the fence and for me to be at his office at 0800 hours the following morning. I said, “Yes, sir.”

Promptly at 0800 I met with the CO and he busted me to PFC. Big deal! I left and went back to my tent. On the way back I saw new replacements coming in, which we really needed. Our platoon was only about half the size it needed to be. I heard my name called, and as I walked towards the voice, there stood Avery. Boy was I happy! I hadn’t seen him since we joined together. Immediately, I took him to meet my platoon leader, Lt. Peeler. The lieutenant asked if we were related, to which I replied, “No.” So, my brother ended up being my platoon sergeant.

\* \* \* \* \*

In July we had been in reserve for about fifty days when all hell broke loose—the “gooks” were hitting every hill.

We were going to Boulder City and Lt. Peeler was taking an advance party that included four others and myself. All outposts were in front of the MLR, and Boulder City was about a mile away. Still riding in a 4 x 4 truck, we had to go through 76 Alley (76 are anti-tank guns) and I didn’t think we were going to make it, but we did. We quickly disembarked and began fighting—it was a mess. Soon, everyone had become separated and on their own.

As I was fighting my way around the hill, I picked up three men; enough for a fire team. We were on a road, or a big trail, I don’t know which since it was so dark. Apparently, a “gook” spotter must have noticed us and called in 76’s on us. We continued on, but the shells were getting closer. There was a cut-out in the road, and as soon as we got in it a shell hit just past us. We had made it to safety—wrong! The soldier closest to the shell was unscratched. I, being next, received a wound to my right knee. The soldier next to me, lost both legs, and the soldier at the end—lost his life.

The guy who lost his legs was screaming loudly, and the “gooks” zeroed in on us. I tried to get to him, but when I tried to stand—I couldn’t. That’s when I realized I had been wounded. As I started to crawl to the road, the shelling became heavier, so, I hopped on one leg to the aid bunker. After telling the corpsman about the other Marines, I blacked out.

The next thing I remembered, I was on the hospital ship *USS Haven*, awakening to the voice of the doctor saying, “This Hale isn’t going to make it.” I told him I wasn’t hurt that bad. He replied, “Not you, this Hale.” I looked over at the bunk next to me, and there laid Avery. I started screaming that they had better save my brother. The doctors could not believe that as big as the *Haven* was, and as many wounded that were aboard that they had put two brothers next to each other.

Knowing the War Department would be sending telegrams to our parents, I yelled for the Red Cross to send one saying that we were not hurt that bad. They wouldn’t do it unless I paid for it. I had nothing of my own

—much less money. A chaplain heard me yelling, and he said that he would send it for me. I knew it would help our parents to hear from us.

We were sent to Japan for nearly a month. Our brother Donald was in Japan, and he came by every other day to visit us; that sure was nice.

\* \* \* \* \*

After boot camp, I thought I knew what the Marines were all about. How wrong was I? One must go into combat with them to fully understand them. They truly are brothers-in-arms.

Semper Fi.

*~~Sixty-Nine~~*

**Charles Klenklen**

*279th Infantry Regiment*

*45th Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

I was glad the U.S. Postal Service didn't deliver mail on Christmas Day, so I received my draft notice on the 26th of December, 1951.

I traveled by bus to Kansas City for my physical. Later I would return for my induction into the U.S. Army—on March 5, 1952. For processing I was sent to Camp Crowder, Missouri. From there I took another bus to Fort Riley, Kansas, where I was assigned to Company A, 87th Infantry Regiment, 10th Infantry Division. Now began my basic training.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I arrived in Korea, on the 1st of September 1952, I was assigned to Company K, 279th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. During September, we arrived at the 3rd Battalion's area of Luke's Castle, where a few of us were reassigned. Along with three other guys, I was assigned to L Company. The North Koreans really put us to the test during our stay here. It was only about seventy yards from our trenches to their lines, and they were looking down on us from a higher elevation. On the 25th of October, we were relieved by a company from the 179th Regiment. Boy was I glad to get out of there.

We moved to a reserve area where we received a much needed shower and clean clothes. A few days later, during the month of November, I was sent to the School of Standards for NCO School.

The day I left school, it was raining and was I ever glad the truck had a cover. As we went further north the rain turned to snow. Before reaching L Company, the driver was having a hard time navigating in the knee deep snow. After dark, we stopped at the forward supply. The following morning

a jeep came by that was loaded with supplies for L Company, so I crawled on top of them. The driver took off up the ridge line until he came to the end of the trail, then we had to walk the rest of the way up to Anchor Hill where the company was located. It was 1100 meters high and seventy miles north of the 38th parallel and just three miles from the east coast. On a clear night, we could see muzzle flashes from the Navy's big guns as they fired into North Korea.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was around the 28th of December, 1952, when we were relieved by the 51st Regiment of the ROK's 12th Division. We moved to a reserve area at the western end of Hwachon Reservoir. It was an all night trip in the back of a two-and-a-half ton truck—with no cover. It was bitterly cold, and the only way we could stay warm was to get into our sleeping bags.

After several days of training, we moved up on the line at Heartbreak Ridge. We were there until February 18, 1953 when the 179th Regiment relieved us and we went into division reserve. A few days later we received orders to go to Koje-do to replace the 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division—to guard the POW camps. We received several hours of training on the proper way to handle the POW's. A buddy of mine and I were sent in advance to the east coast arriving at night. We laid out our sleeping bags on the beach. When we woke the next morning I thought it had snowed, but it was just a heavy frost. Later in the day, the 279th vehicles began to arrive and we loaded onto the waiting ships. The vehicles were loaded first, then the troops; we had to climb boarding nets in the rough sea. Several GI's, fell in the water with some receiving injuries. My buddy and I were the last two to board the ship.

We arrived at Koje-do the next day, with the 279th setting up in tents, in a cleared out area. One night a storm with strong winds and hard rain hit. When morning arrived there were only two tents left standing, and the mud was boot-top deep. We then moved into metal buildings that had cement floors, electric lights, and showers; we were living the good life.

Now that we had taken over guard duty, we took shifts of four hours on and eight hours off—the eight hours off were during the day. We either trained in the hills or took ten prisoners on work details, which was a very demanding job; they had to be closely watched.

The truce talks seemed to be going smoothly, so a decision was made to switch sick and wounded prisoners; on the 11th of April, Little Switch took place. Our company was assigned the task of escorting the sick and wounded to Panmunjom; we traveled by train from Pusan. We accompanied fourteen train loads of prisoners, and I was a Quarters Guard on three trips. During each trip we were on guard for twenty-eight to thirty hours. After the prisoners were unloaded, each train car was cleaned. Needless to say, we slept on the return trip to Pusan. Our last load was on May 3, 1953, and then we returned to Kojedo—for more guard duty.

On the 1st of June, the 279th was relieved of its duties of guarding the POW's and rejoined the division, which was in reserve near Inje. While we were in reserve, they put us through ten, eighteen hour days of training; this was to get us ready for combat—again. We moved to Sandbag Castle, where I was assigned to a .50 caliber machine gun.

We remained here until the 3rd of July, when the 224th Infantry Regiment of the 40th Infantry Division relieved us. The following day we moved up to the MLR, which was located on Christmas Hill. As we marched by an ammo truck, every man was given a box of ammo. With the rain, and carrying our weapons and full gear, several of the guys had set their boxes along side of the road. It was a good thing the Chinese didn't attack us during the night, so back down the hill I went to collect the ammo boxes.

The Chinese hit us every night and because K Company had lost so many men, L Company swapped positions with them. We held our ground until the 27th of July, 1953—the day the truce was signed.

The cease-fire took effect at 10:00 PM and it was so quiet, it was scary.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had the needed thirty-six points to rotate home, but the list that came down a few days after the truce just missed me. All rotations home were canceled so American POW's could go home. Needless to say, I wanted to go home, but I was happier knowing these GI's were getting out of those North Korean prison camps.

During the last of August, I received my orders to go home—what a happy day that was.[\[8\]](#)

~~*Seventy*~~

**Dr. John Laura**

*120th Medical BN*

*45th Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

Dentists were in high demand in Korea. Having completed one year of internship at University of Chicago Clinics, and four years of private practice in Syracuse, New York, I was encouraged to join the Reserves. A friend, who was a reserve officer, swore me in—I volunteered for active duty.

My first assignment was at the Brooke Army Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. While here I had an operation, which put me in Brooke Army Hospital. During my recovery, I was able to look around the hospital, particularly the burn ward. Little did I know that later that year I would see burn patients who would be sent to this very ward.

\* \* \* \* \*

After arriving in Yokusaka, Japan, I was taken by train to a port in south Japan for a boat ride to Pusan, Korea. From here I traveled by train to Seoul, for my assignment. I would be assigned to the 120th Medical BN of the 45th Infantry Division. Here I was given a “Chest 60,” which is the size of a footlocker. It contained everything I needed to practice; a collapsible chair; a foot treadle to operate the revolving hand drill; tools and supplies for fillings and minor dental surgery. I carried this with me as I moved around in Korea.

I would be assigned temporary duty to different outfits in the 45th. My first assignment would be at Camp Casey, where replacements for the division received their indoctrination. I did a lot of silver fillings and extracted many wisdom teeth that were partly erupted, and causing the individual trouble.

From there I went to the 245th Tank BN and as the division moved on and off the line, I moved with them. So, it involved a lot of packing and unpacking of my equipment. I always had a dental assistant to help me, and to keep the instruments clean and sterilized. My assistant was able to scrounge up a motor and generator, so he wouldn't have to pump the foot treadle. However, we soon discovered that we had to be sure we grounded the motor, or touching a patient would cause a spark to jump from the drill.

After the 245th, I moved to the division's HQ where I became Division Prosthodontist. This meant I made bridges and dentures for the division. I would have each unit send a needy GI to my clinic. The soldier would be assigned TDY (temporary duty) to the hospital, and in two-and-a-half days he would have the appliance made. After which time, he was sent back to his unit.

The wounded were taken to aid stations where they were either treated and sent back to their units, or evacuated to a M.A.S.H. unit or a field hospital. I helped with suturing gunshot wounds in an aid station. Near one of the aid stations, an ammunition truck blew up and my assistant and I helped in treating some of the burn victims; this was a nightmarish experience.

Hearing that a dentist was needed with the 279th Regiment to go to an island south of Korea, called Koje-do to guard a prisoner of war camp, I volunteered to go with them. While here I only treated U.S. troops—no prisoners.

After spending thirteen months in Korea, I would spend the rest of my two-year tour of active duty at Governors Island in New York Harbor.

~~*Seventy-One*~~

**Chuck Gibbs**

*Signal Corps*

*40th Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

I was born in Knoxville, Tennessee on December 4, 1929. The Great Depression bankrupted my family—like many others—and left them with nothing except the clothes on their backs. We moved to San Antonio, Texas, where my uncle took us in until my parents were able to get back on their feet. My father became a dairy farmer.

During 1946, I met Fran Kilpatrick—the love of my life—and on July 5, 1949 we were married. However, in 1948 I enlisted in the 95th Medical Group, Texas National Guard in San Antonio. I was a low ranking enlisted man and wasn't making enough money for a family to live on, so I applied for Officer Candidate School so I could make enough to support my family. In 1951 I was accepted into the Signal Corps OCS and after long and hard, training, I was sent to Korea to join the infantry on the front lines.

I can't recall the name of the ship I sailed to Korea on, but I do remember being a compartment commander for four-hundred troops. It was one of the worst winters ever and the ship bounced around terribly. I believe all four-hundred men vomited constantly. We arrived in Korea during December of 1952.

Being a Signal Corps Outside Plant Officer with the 40th Infantry Division, I was responsible for keeping the communication cables and telephone lines up, and working at all times. This was not an easy task as the North Koreans kept firing artillery in our area, constantly knocking out our communication lines. To make matters worse, the South Korean civilians would cut out the brass cable connectors from the communication cable, in order to make souvenirs to sell to our guys.

Each time a cable or telephone line went out, which usually occurred during the night, my outside plant teams had to locate the breaks and fix them ASAP. Sometimes as many as ten spans of cable and/or wire had to be dropped, repaired, and replaced. The telephone poles in Korea were only about 5" in diameter, so a large American soldier couldn't climb them because they would break. Thankfully, over half of my teams were KATUSA's, who were very small and light weight Korean soldiers. Needless to say, they had the job of climbing the poles and doing all the required work. Now imagine this; there are ten of them on the top of ten poles, when suddenly they hear an incoming artillery round. Immediately—at lightning speed—they slid down the poles. I told them dozens of times that when they heard an incoming round there was no need to come down, because it had already gone over their head. However, they came down anyway. It was fun to watch them, because it looked like a synchronized dance.

While we were located near the Punchbowl, which was off limits to all civilians, we kept finding young Korean girls living in caves not far from Division Headquarters. The mystery: how did the girls get past security and into our headquarters area? The answer: when the kitchen water truck, and trailer, went back to the civilian area to get fresh drinking water, the guys would put the girls in the water tanks. The girls would be in water up to their necks, and during the night the guys would take them out and move them to the caves. Only an American GI could be so creative! However, it did not take long until all the girls were rounded up and taken back to the civilian zone. Needless to say, all of us soldiers quit drinking the water and wrote home telling our loved ones to start sending us juice and bottled water.

Korea was hell, but I was lucky to serve my tour without a scratch when so many of my buddies were wounded or killed.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1963, I became an Army Chaplain and served in the Vietnam War in this capacity. After Vietnam I was given many promotions and great assignments around the world. In 1989, as a Colonel, I retired from the Army.

I thank God for a great life as a soldier and as a soldier's pastor.

*~~Seventy-Two~~*

**Jerry Cunningham**

*15th Infantry Regiment*

*3rd Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

In August of 1952, there were many young men being processed through the Army reception station at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Some had volunteered, some had been drafted. Waiting in line were two young African Americans who had volunteered; Rudolph Randall and myself.

Rudolph and I began talking to each other. He was from Tampa, Florida and I was from Fort Lawn, South Carolina. This was the first time either of us had been away from our families. On that August day, while standing in line, we became friends.

After everyone had gone through processing, we then were shipped to different army installations across the country. Around 4:30 AM one morning, the processing First Sergeant began calling names of those that were to be shipped out that morning. Rudolph looked at me and said, "I guess this is where we will separate from each other." Luckily, our names were not called.

Again at 1:00 PM, this procedure was repeated. I told Rudolph, "This might be the time we will say good-bye to each other." As the sergeant began calling out names, he called my name first, then Rudolph's; then the names of other soldiers. We were being assigned to Indian Town Gap, in Pennsylvania—we were still together. At 4:00 PM we headed for the train station in Columbia, South Carolina.

The following day, around 5:00 PM, we arrived at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where we were greeted by Army buses waiting to pick us up. After arriving at the base everyone was assigned to companies and barracks. Again Rudolph and I were still together and assigned to the first

platoon and the first floor—each barracks had two floors. As we were putting our bags down, I told him, “God must have meant it to be this way.”

He replied, “Yes. It has to be the Lord’s will for us to still be together.”

Our twelve weeks of basic training was ready to begin.

Finally, basic training was over and graduation day was here. For the first time, we got to dress in our Army Khaki uniforms and look like proud soldiers. For me it was a dream come true. Now came time for every graduate to receive orders for their new assignments. Guess what? Rudolph and I got our new assignment—Korea.

I already had a brother there; he was in the Air Force. We both agreed not to tell our mothers, so we decided to tell them we were to be stationed in Japan. I don’t think mom believed me; however, she let on like she did. She said, “I’ll still be praying for you and your friends.”

After a seven day furlough to visit home, we had to report to the main terminal at the train station in Chicago, Illinois. The long troop train, carrying three-or-four thousand soldiers departed Chicago headed for Seattle, Washington.

Upon our arrival in Seattle, we were taken by Army buses to the Debarkation Building and Transport Ship Docks. Once in our barracks, we were put on lock-down and told to remain in the barracks at all times. We stayed at this location for about four days. One day, our barracks sergeant and some MP’s marched us to a chapel for “spirit guiding.” Once inside we held a group funeral service. The chaplain said many of us would not be returning home; Rudolph and myself took those words in stride.

One morning, around 3:00 AM, we were awakened by MP’s telling us to get dressed and to gather all our personal belongings. We were then to go outside and board the waiting buses. As the buses pulled along side of a huge ship, we were ordered to disembark with all our equipment. After we boarded the ship, we were escorted to our pre-assigned ship compartment; this was to be the beginning of a twenty-one day journey.

On some days they would let us go on the top deck for some fresh air, but most of the time us low ranking soldiers would be pulling KP, or other duties aboard ship—sometimes for twelve hours straight. Due to seasickness, I spent seven days in sickbay. Finally, we reached Yokohama,

Japan, where we stayed for three or four days. While here, we were taken to a rifle range for continued training. After the ship had refueled, we set sail again; this time for Korea. After about a three or four day voyage, we arrived in Pusan, South Korea.

After disembarking we were loaded onto trucks and taken to a troop-train, on which every window and door was riddled with bullet holes. Once we arrived at our destination, we again loaded onto trucks and headed to a large replacement station. This is where all the Army replacement soldiers were assigned to the different divisions in Korea.

The sergeant in charge had us stand in formation as he called out a name, and serial number. He then would tell that soldier which division he was to report too. I told Rudolph, "Well buddy, this looks like where we might have to depart from each other." With tears in our eyes, we listened as names were being called. Suddenly, the sergeant said, "The following two soldiers move over here to my right. You're assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division; Jerry Cunningham and Rudolph M. Randall."

We loaded into a jeep and were taken to the 3rd Division. Here we were greeted by a captain who told us we would stay there for the night, and to get some rest. The next day, we would join our unit on the front line. With all those big guns blasting away in the distance, we didn't get much sleep. Later that night, we were informed we both were assigned to Easy Company of the 15th Infantry Regiment.

After arriving in the rear of the front line, we were issued our basic weapons; a new BAR and a new .45 pistol. We had both scored as experts on these weapons during our basic training. Next we were taken to Easy Company and introduced to our platoon and squad leaders, along with the rest of the guys. I was assigned to the second platoon and Rudolph to the third. Shortly afterwards, I met my BAR assistant.

A few days later the second platoon was assigned the task of a night patrol, on the west side of Outpost Harry. Normally when a platoon goes on patrol, the squads go out at different intervals. The first went out at dusk, with the second going out at midnight to relieve the first squad. Out in front were our platoon leader and our point man. As we approached the first squad's location, which was set up in a horseshoe shape, a soldier in their center opened fire on us. Our platoon leader ordered us to return fire,

thinking the Chinese had captured the first squad and was ambushing us. Quickly both leaders contacted each other and ordered us to cease fire. Three soldiers were killed during this incident, including my squad leader—Corporal Frank Loiacono. As everyone was grouped together, crying and yelling at each other, the Chinese fired an artillery shell at us. If it had exploded, it probably would have killed all of us. Lucky for us, it landed in a wet, muddy rice paddy and did not explode. Headquarters ordered both patrols back to the MLR.

On another night a KATUSA and I were sent to a listening post, which consisted of a two-man foxhole with a telephone line running back to company headquarters. The foxhole was roughly three-or-four feet from a trail leading down from Star Hill, which was under Chinese control. While Kim (the KATUSA) and I took turns of rotating positions, one would be kneeling down while the other one was standing and observing the area around our foxhole. It was Kim's turn to be standing, when around 2:00 AM he said he smelt Chinese coming. I told him that he didn't and that he was trying to get me to stand up before my turn. It hadn't been five minutes, when I noticed a large patrol of Chinese coming down the trail—directly towards us. Crouching down in the hole, I peeked from the top of the hole only to notice they were so close I could see their faces. After they passed us, I quickly got on the phone and reported it to our CP. They informed us to lay low, because we would be receiving artillery near our location. Sure enough, here they came. The third or fourth round hit near the patrol, with the rest falling directly on them. After being ordered back to the MLR, Kim and I were shaking so bad they gave us some hot coffee and told us to get some sleep. No one ever told us what a good, or bad, job we had done; nor did anyone say anything about our encounter with the Chinese that night.

In April the weather started warming up and the Chinese became more active. One night they attacked the outpost with four-or-five human waves. They were able to get into the trenches of L Company, resulting in hand-to-hand combat.

At the end of May, the 2nd BN was relieved from the front and taken to the rear for a little R&R and more training. Rudolph and I never missed a day of seeing each other, whether we were on the line or in a rear blocking position. During the two weeks we were in the rear, we made a promise to each other; if either of us didn't make it home alive, the survivor would

place flowers on the others grave. At the end of these two weeks, our battalion was ordered to move to the rear of the front line.

On the night of June 10, around 6:00 PM, all kinds of artillery shells started falling around our position. Roughly three to three-and-a-half hours later, we were told that Outpost Harry was getting hit hard. They told us to grab our weapons, ammo, and to leave our other equipment, and to load onto the trucks. As we headed to the outpost, there were times we had to dismount and run along side of the tanks as enemy shells were landing near us. Arriving at the rear of the outpost, my squad and another squad along with two tanks received orders to move to the southeast of Harry. Our objective was to protect the tanks from the enemy's ground forces, while the tanks secured the east side. Earlier in the year, Army Combat Engineers had implanted fifty-five gallon drums of napalm five feet apart around the entire hill. Located inside the command bunker on Outpost Harry, was the detonating switch.

Supported by mortar and artillery fire, the Chinese attacked the hill in two human waves, with each wave consisting of about four-hundred troops. From our position we could see and hear soldiers from both sides screaming, hollering, crying, and dying. The Chinese had managed to get into the trenches of K Company, which resulted in hand-to-hand combat. With the aid of our mortars and artillery, the Chinese were beaten back. Company K held the hill for a short period of time.

At 3:00 AM on the morning of the 11th of June, the Chinese launched the largest human wave attack of them all. Like ants, they were crawling all over the hill. As they crawled up the hill the drums of napalm ignited, spreading fire over the Chinese soldiers; the hill lit up like a Christmas tree. The smell of smoke, and human flesh, lingered over Outpost Harry. I was praying, "Dear Lord, there are many souls departing this earth this morning. Please give them a better home in your Kingdom," the whole time. Around daylight we were ordered to report to the backside of the outpost, near the aid station.

Here, Colonel Akers ordered us to go up on Harry and clear it of the Chinese. As we prepared to go, I knew we would be seeing many dead and wounded soldiers from both sides. To myself, I started repeating Psalms 23, and the nerves of my assistant gunner failed him. He froze up and was sitting in a crouched position with his head between his knees—crying. I

took all his ammo and started moving up the hill; that was the last time I saw him.

While advancing through the trenches, over dead and wounded GI's and Chinese, the Chinese came around a corner on the west side of Harry. With my BAR, in the ready position, I told them to halt! The two in front leaned forward, and the one the back threw a grenade at me. At the same time, I mowed all three down. Luckily for me, the grenade didn't go off. Continuing to see if there were any more live Chinese, we received word to move off the hill and to bring a wounded GI with us. After taking the wounded soldier to the aid station, I was told to go to a lookout station along a ridge on the southeast side of Harry. I was told to watch for any Chinese movement.

About an hour after arriving, a Chinese artillery shell exploded about twenty yards from my position, but I paid no attention to it. Later on, Rudolph came to where I was and we started talking about what had just happened on Harry. As we talked, he noticed blood coming from my left boot. I looked down and saw the boot was full of blood, and that there was a hole that went all the way through my left leg. I began to feel weak, and thirsty. I asked Rudolph for some water, which he gave me. He then picked me up, placed my arm around his neck, and carried me to the aid station. Due to the amount of blood that I had lost, I was slipping in and out of consciousness.

After the medics stopped the bleeding, they placed me in the front passenger seat of a medic's jeep. As the jeep faced downhill, they loaded the wounded in the rear. Suddenly, the jeep started rolling down the hill towards a branch, and because of a wound to my leg I was unable to stop it. Rudolph started running along side of the jeep, grabbing the steering wheel and turning it into a dirt bank. He told me to take care of myself and that my wound would send me stateside, and that he would see back in the States. This was the last I saw, or heard from my buddy.

I was taken to a hospital in southern Japan for six months and when I was well enough, I wrote to Rudolph. About a week later, my letter came back.

During my stay here, early one morning the head nurse escorted an Airman to my bedside; it was my brother Willie (W.C.). I thought I was

dreaming, or my pain medication was playing tricks with my mind. However, it was really W.C... The Air Force and American Red Cross had rushed him from Korea to Japan after they received word of me being wounded in action. He was able to stay for over a week, and then he had to return to Korea. Shortly after he left, I had a major setback.

It was an August morning; still in the hospital and unable to walk. After the doctors had made their rounds the hospital chaplain came to my bed with a curious look on his face, pushing a wheelchair. After asking me my name, which I told him, he asked if I had a good nights rest. He then informed me that he had come to take me for a ride in the wheelchair. Helping me out of bed and into the wheelchair, out of the hospital we went. As he pushed me down a ramp, he told me that he needed to talk with me. So, he took me to the hospital chapel.

After entering the chapel, he wheeled me along side the front row of seats and began to talk to me about my family. Then he asked some questions about my mother. I asked him, "Is my mother alright?"

He replied, "Yes, she is alright—she is now in Heaven."

On June 23, 1953, twelve days after I was wounded, my mother passed away.

He told me the reason I had not been informed of my mother's death, was due to my medical condition. Regardless, I would not have been able to have gone home—I started crying.

I was reassigned to Kokura Army Depot, in Japan, as a wheel vehicle supply specialist for eighteen months. When I returned to the United States, I was again assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was discharged in August of 1955.

After my discharge I wrote to the Department of the Army asking about Rudolph, and how could I get in touch with him. I received a letter from them informing me that on June 14, 1953, Rudolph had been killed in action.

Following years of research, on July 28, 2006, my wife and I departed Columbia, South Carolina in route to Tampa, Florida with one goal in mind—find the final resting place of Rudolph M. Randall.

On the morning of the 29th of June, we arrived at Stones Funeral Home and met with a Ms. Wonder. She was very helpful to us and asked us to follow her to the Rest Haven Cemetery. Upon arriving, we spread out and began our search for Rudolph's grave. After a couple of hours, the cemetery director, Mr. James McEwen, noticed our search and asked if he could be of assistance.

Taking us back to his office, he gave us a refreshing drink of cold water and did some research on his computer. He found the location where those who died in the 1950's would have been buried, but we found no headstone with the name—Rudolph M. Randall. I choose a location where Mr. McEwen and I both thought Rudolph might have been buried. Here I placed a flower that I had purchased earlier, and gave a salute to my buddy—Rudolph M. Randall. A promise that had been made some fifty-three years earlier, in the hills of Korea, had been completed.[\[9\]](#)

*~~Seventy-Three~~*

**Donald “Hank” Nicol**

*179th Regiment*

*45th Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

On the 26th of February, 1930, I was born in Pasadena, California. In 1947, I enrolled in Bakersfield College, but academic life wasn't doing much for me, or I it. So, when President Truman reinstated the draft in 1948, I enlisted. According to the fine print, in the Selective Service Act, anyone that was drafted would serve for twenty-one months. However, if you enlisted, and was eighteen years old, you only had to serve one year plus some time in the reserve; I joined the U.S. Army.

The day before I was to report to Fort MacArthur, my father drove me down to San Pedro where we stayed with one of his friends. The following morning I walked a few blocks to the Fort where I received a physical along with forty-or-fifty other guys. One of which was Frank Pellet, a high school classmate.

The morning after being sworn in, we boarded a train bound for Fort Ord. Here we were issued wool olive-drab uniforms, and then we were loaded onto another train headed for Camp Hood, Texas. Here I was assigned to Company C, Fourth Training Battalion, Second Armored Division.

After basic training most of the guys from the training battalion were assigned to the 41st Armored Infantry Battalion. As for me, I was assigned to Headquarters Company where I became a truck driver.

\* \* \* \* \*

On January 2, 1952, I was a new second lieutenant reporting to Camp Roberts. Wearing my poncho, I stood in the pouring rain as a group of new recruits crawled in the mud and rain. Even though the poncho kept me nice

and warm, guess who caught pneumonia? A month later, after I had been released from the hospital, I was transferred to Camp Cook. Here I was assigned to Company L, 130th Infantry Regiment, 44th Division—a federalized National Guard Company.

After spending a few months at Cook, a few second lieutenants—including myself—were shipped off to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Here we sat in classrooms, and grandstands, listening to lectures and watching demonstrations. Then we would go out in the field to apply what we had learned. We fired various types of weapons, fought with bayonets, assaulted hills, and threw grenades; which I excelled in. We familiarized ourselves with the tank, and even made a water crossing in assault barges. Then we watched as the artillery gave an impressive demonstration.

When my training was over, I volunteered for paratrooper school. Lucky for me, my commanding officer at Cook refused to release me. I had heard about an officer at the Pentagon who would talk to anyone, about anything. So, before I headed back to Cook, I flew to Washington D.C. to meet him. Arriving at the Pentagon, I met a kindly old Brigadier General who listened to my every word. And he gave me what I asked for—a twenty day furlough, then a free trip to Korea.

\* \* \* \* \*

I boarded the *MSTS General A.W. Brewster* at the Oakland Army Base; our voyage to Japan was uneventful. The ship finally docked at Yokohama, Japan where we disembarked and boarded a train for Camp Drake. Here I traded my olive-drabs for fatigues, and loaded myself down with gear that I would never need, or use.

As our ship sailed toward Korea, I must say my first sight of the “Land of the Morning Calm” was not very encouraging. The hills behind Pusan were bare and brown, except areas that were covered with patches of snow. Before we disembarked, we were entertained by an Army band standing on the dock, playing, “If I knew you were coming, I’d have baked a cake.” Orders came down for us to go ashore with our weapons slung and the muzzles down; this meant we were entering a friendly country.

We boarded a claptrap train that huffed and puffed its way northward. The cars were made of wood, except the undercarriages; the seats were benches with straight backs. It was apparent that the Pullman Corporation hadn't reached Korea.

Finally, we reached the city of Yong Dong-Po and went through a Repot Depot. I was given a form to fill out, which asked me to put down my three choices division assignment. My first choice was the 3rd, followed by the 7th, then the 45th. Along with four other second lieutenants, I was loaded onto a 6 x 6 truck that bounced all the way through Chunchon.

After reaching the 45th Division Replacement Center, which was located on the north side of the Soyang River, I was assigned to Company B, 179th Infantry Regiment.

It was during December of 1952 when I reached the Punchbowl, and assigned to a rifle platoon on Hill 777. The lieutenant I was replacing showed me the view from the hill, as he pointed out an enemy position known as the "Ice Cream Cone." I told him it didn't look much like an ice cream cone to me. He told that I should have seen it a few days earlier before the artillery took twenty feet off the top. To the right, he pointed out a position called "Luke's Castle," which was named for the legendary North Korean sniper, "Luke the Gook."

Then there was "Smoke Valley" to our right rear. The lieutenant explained that this position was completely exposed to the enemy, but this was the only place to set up our artillery. So, to hide them, smoke generators spewed white clouds across the valley.

The day I arrived, I was treated to a hot lunch. After most of the men had eaten, the other lieutenant and I got in line. The only places to set were either covered in ice or snow, so I stood. It was hard to operate my spoon while wearing mittens, so I removed the one on my right hand. I couldn't get the bite to my mouth before my hand was freezing—the weather was bitterly cold. So, I put my mitten back on and tried to eat something before the food froze.

Unfortunately, our little picnic—in the snow—was interrupted when we saw black specks falling from F-80's as they cruised overhead. Needless to say, when the specks hit the ground, they exploded. The only place to scatter to was along the road we were standing in, which was cut into the

side of a steep mountainside. The F-80's continued to make more passes over Smoke Valley, dropping bombs and strafing. A smoke screen was used as an indicator of friendly forces in Korea, so these guys must have been complete idiots for going after "our" artillery. From the valley floor I could hear quad-50's trying to drive them away. Finally, a T-6 trainer, which was used as a spotter plane was able to head off the returning jets. Although minor, this was my first introduction to war.

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When talking on the radio, we used more jargon than secret codes. The 179th was Pagan, and its three battalions were Red, White, and Blue.

Pagan Red was pulled back and placed in reserve on New Years Eve 1952. When you were off the front lines you continued training, so I was sent to Chunchon for leadership school. While there I developed an itch on my hands and feet, and I was bounced from an Army doctor to an Air Force doctor, of which neither knew what it was or how to cure it. Finally, I went to an aid station and explained my symptoms to the corporal that was on duty; he was able to cure it.

Upon returning to the regiment, I was chewed out by a major for having lost so much time. He ordered me to get healthy, and stay healthy. As punishment, me being the least experienced second lieutenant in the battalion, he sent me as a permanent Officer of the Day with a platoon to guard a radio relay station on top of a mountain.

The relay station had Quonset hut barracks, which was more comfortable than the tents we had at the reserve camp. During the night we placed sentries and sent out patrols, which no one saw any living creatures except themselves. However, every morning we found deer tracks in the thin layer of snow that covered the entire area; I hoped the enemy was clumsier than those deer.

One night I was roaming between guard posts when I met Sergeant Legge and a squad leader. I was perched on an embankment and they were on the road below. It was a moonless night, and I guessed the drop to the road below was about five or six feet—wrong. Jumping down, I wasn't ready for the landing and I hit the road with two stiff legs; the blow pushed the air out of my lungs. A few seconds later I was able to get my breath.

Suddenly, a shot rang out from the Quonset hut and the sergeant and I arrived at the front door at the same time. Inside we found one soldier, with a BAR, sitting on a cot and another one cowering at the end of the barracks. Apparently the soldier with the BAR was cleaning his loaded weapon. Needless to say, the sergeant and I blasted him with every cuss word we knew.

When I returned from the relay station, Pagan Red had moved to a new camp located in a flat bottom of a wide canyon. It was still too cold to be living in tents. I found a wool summer sleeping bag, which I put inside my winter bag. Then I hung a lighter-fluid burning hand warmer from my dog-tag chain—it didn't help much.

Two or three days later, Pagan Red was ordered back to the front lines. Before we left, word was passed around that everyone was to cover their helmet. The Marines had real helmet covers, so we had to make do with what we had. Everyone, except me, used sandbags; I didn't think a burlap helmet cover would look too cool. I found a sleeping bag cover, which happened to be the same color as our fatigues.

The 179th was sent up to the area around Heartbreak Ridge. Charlie Company's second platoon was actually on Heartbreak, with their third platoon stretched across the Mundung-ni Valley. My first platoon was located on a no-name ridge to the left.

We were separated from the third platoon by an un-climbable hill, so we were attached to either Able or Baker Company. This seemed to be the worse position imaginable, until we found ourselves on Outpost Queen. The unit we were relieving informed us that a month or so earlier they had relieved a platoon from the 40th Infantry Division. This platoon had fifteen machine guns—one for every two men. When they left, they didn't take their ammunition. The hill was littered with steel boxes full of .30 caliber machine gun belts. We only had one .30 caliber machine gun; however, we were low on ammo for our M-1's and BAR's. So, we dismantled the belts and put the rounds into the clips for the M-1's and magazines for the BAR's.

One morning as I stepped out into the blinding sunlight, I met a major walking down the trench. He was all clean, and shiny; so, I saluted. He told me he was there to inspect the MLR. I told him that I would show him

around, when a shell hit about two-hundred yards from us. He quickly told me that was okay but he needed to get back to the division—he left.

A few days later, I received the inspectors report. There was only one item on it, “Lieutenant Nichols was dirty and had not shaved.” He didn’t even spell my name correctly. The commander of Pagan Red, Major Cruikshank, being an old dogface himself was sympathetic. So, he sent up five razor blades for the troops.

Suddenly, someone yelled out an alarm and I again came out of the CP bunker into a blinding sunlight. I ran into two soldiers dragging a wounded GI from a bunker that had been hit. Under the clutter of logs and dirt, I found a KATUSA buried up to his waist. The enemy kept firing at us, so I began to dig furiously. After pulling a log off the guy, I scratched away some loose dirt using a bayonet or helmet—I can’t remember which. As I looked up, there digging from the other side was Corporal Gaeton Briseno. Shortly afterwards, a medic reached over my shoulder and gave the KATUSA a shot of morphine. He then inserted a needle that was attached to a bottle by a rubber tube into the guys arm. The medic said the bottle contained “albumin,” or plasma.

I tried to find his legs by sliding one hand along whatever I could find, and using the other hand to sweep away dirt. Finally, I was able to get my fingers under the buckle of his boot and lifted. When his leg came out of the dirt, it bent forward where there was no joint. Then I found the other leg and it was limp as a hamburger. The medic was standing by with a litter. We quickly loaded him onto the litter and two guys carried him across an open field, while the medic held the bottle of albumin.

Weeks later we heard the KATUSA had lived, but his legs had to be amputated.

The weather had moderated enough that I was able to put away my parka. Everyone in the platoon had been on R&R and was able to shower at least once. Now it was my turn. I walked up the trench to the road, when I met Lt. Colonel Cruikshank—a week earlier he was a major. As I walked a little further, I came to a notch in the ridge that had been cut out for a tank. Earlier that morning, Lt. MacIntyre of Baker Company had been killed in that very spot by a 61mm mortar. Being out in the open, I ran towards an area that provided some cover. Apparently, I didn’t run far enough; as I

slowed down I heard an explosion and felt a burning sensation in my left wrist.

Being off balance, and in case of another incoming shell, I jumped into a ditch. As I looked up, I saw three guys running over to me. They helped me up and a medic named Bennett put a band-aid on my wrist. Holding my hand up high, Bennett walked me to Baker Company's CP. Here, belly down, I was placed in a litter jeep. Apparently, I had been wounded in the butt as well. This was March 4, 1953, and the weather was still cold.

When I arrived at the battalion aid station, Doc Schorr cut off my suspenders to check my left buttock. He then applied a four inch square gauze on my wrist. I was taken to the division clearing station, where a doctor put a wooden splint on my wrist. From there I was taken, by another meat wagon, to the 46th ASU (Army Surgical Unit). I was taken into surgery where they placed a knuckles-to-elbow cast.

From the 46th ASU, via the 11th Evacuation Hospital at Wonju, I was flown to Japan where I ended up at the General Hospital at Camp Drew. There were two other second lieutenants in the officers ward; one was an artillery FO, who had walked into the path of a mortar round, the other was a dogface with more than twenty burp gun holes in his hide. Finally, my cast was taken off and I could hardly wait to get back to Korea.

When I arrived back at Pagan Red, I was re-assigned to Baker Company since Charlie Company had already received a full complement of officers. My new platoon was located to the regiments far right, and to our right was the newly arrived 13th Battalion Combat Team of PEFTOK (Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea).

With Baker Company acquiring a full slate of officers, I became weapons platoon leader. One of the rifle platoons was being harassed by a sniper, so I set out to do something about it. Taking a sound powered phone, I scrambled to a forward position. Someone pointed out a spot on Dagmar, which was a double hill named for a television star.

I was a rookie at adjusting mortar fire, so I faked it. The first round landed closer than I thought it would. After the third round landed close, I called for ten more. The sergeant back at the gun informed me the "old man" was yelling for us to stop wasting ammunition. I told him to make up a story, and to give me ten more. When the sixth or seventh shell hit, I saw

a secondary explosion then two bodies flying through the air—in opposite directions. Apparently, the sniper, and a buddy, must have been sitting on a box of grenades.

The sergeant had told the company commander he couldn't get in touch with me, because the phone clips had touched and shorted out communications.

Several weeks later, while we were in another position, we came under enemy mortar fire. As I was running along a trail that led to the third platoon, I heard someone whistling. Immediately, I put my left foot in front of my right, only to trip myself. I quickly scooted into the firing position for the 57mm recoilless rifle, scanning the hill for the enemy through its scope. The Chinese would place their mortars on the forward slope of hills instead of hiding them on the backside. I spotted a mortar in the middle of the hill, on a bare slope. After pointing it out to Corporal Pak, a KATUSA, who was acting as gunner; I quickly loaded the rifle. We fired a few rounds before we finally knocked over the mortar, and scattering the bodies of four men over the hillside.

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While on Heartbreak Ridge, Captain Reed became the CO of Baker Company. Being the new guy in charge, he came down hard on everyone. By the end of his fourth day, the entire company hated him.

A 6 x 6 truck, loaded with rations, ammo and thirty-to-forty five gallon cans of napalm, came up to the end of the road. The driver quickly unloaded his goods and left. Suddenly, enemy rounds began falling with accuracy, causing some of the napalm to catch fire. The rest of the cans had become hot and posed a threat to the pile of mortar ammo.

Captain Reed was able to lure a medic—Corporal Bennett—to help toss the cans of napalm down the hill. As they rolled down the hill most of the cans were burning; some exploded. With skin blackened, and scorched hands, both men had averted a disaster. The company's opinion of Captain Reed changed—he became our hero. Even his attitude towards us changed.

Still on Heartbreak, Baker and Charlie Companies swapped places. A few days later, Captain Reed called all officers together for a speech. It began with "There's one too many chicken shit second lieutenants around

here.” He then called me forward and read the orders promoting me to first lieutenant.

\* \* \* \* \*

One night an enemy force came up the finger in front of the third platoon, which was to the left of our line. They did not attack us immediately, but set up a base of fire support for an assault on Fox Company. Then a larger force came up right in the middle of the company. We drove them off using mortars, recoilless rifles, and bazookas; we never fired a shot from our rifles or machine guns.

A few nights later I went to check on the listening post; finding everyone awake and alert, I went back. As I walked over a crest, there was a loud crack and a flash of light. I began to run for cover when I realized the explosion was not from enemy fire, but from lightning striking the radio antenna next to the communication hut. When I entered the hut, I saw the switchboard had been knocked over and the stunned operator was up against the sandbag wall. The other guys that had gathered around him said the lightning passed through his head—from ear to ear.

I returned to the company and found the first sergeant who had been on the phone, when the bolt of lightning struck the antenna, was nursing a huge headache. Captain Reed told me that sparks, about a foot long, flew out the sergeants opposite ear. For the rest of the night, the captain nor myself would go near the phone.

\* \* \* \* \*

The night before I was to rotate home, the battalion officers threw a party for Lt. Doyle Butler and Wilson, a warrant officer whose first name I can’t remember, and myself.

Early the following morning a jeep with its siren blaring, raced through the battalion area. It was only a practice, but the regiment had to be armed and on the road in fifteen minutes. The most vivid memory of that day was not leaving the company that had been my home, but watching as Pagan Red marched up the road. Leading Able Company was Lt. Peshkoff, who was still feeling the effects from the party the night before.

We three officers, and a dozen or so men, were taken by truck to Inchon or Yong Dong-Po—I can't remember which one. After arriving at the port of Inchon, I was able to get an idea of the problems that our landing forces faced. The tide was out and I looked over the steep rock wall, which extended down some thirty feet to the mud flat.

We boarded the *MSTS Marine Serpent*, which was bound for Fort Lawton in Seattle, Washington.[\[10\]](#)

~~*Seventy-Four*~~

**William “Bill” Warren**

*180th Infantry Medium Tank Company*

*45th Infantry Regiment*

*U.S. Army*

I was born in Windham, Maine on June 23, 1930. In 1948 I graduated from Windham High School and on February 8, 1952 was drafted by the U.S. Army.

After being inducted into the Army at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, I was sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky for six weeks of basic training—in tanks. When I finished basic, I attended leadership school for eight weeks. During the last week I found out that I had been turned down for OCS and had received orders for the Far East Command—Korea.

I went home for an eight day leave, and then I headed for Camp Stoneman, California. In early December of 1952 I boarded the *MSTS Pope* bound for Korea. We docked in Yokohama, Japan where we then traveled to Camp Drake. After spending some time here we finally took a long train ride to Sasebo and Camp Gifu, for two weeks of CBR School.

I was issued an M-1 rifle even though I told them I was a tanker, not a rifleman. We then boarded a ferry for an overnight voyage to Pusan, Korea. I can't remember how long we stayed there before they loaded us on the Chunchon Express. The train was equipped with wooden slat seats that were so uncomfortable you couldn't sit or sleep on them.

Finally, we arrived at the 45th Divisions replacement depot where we received the standard Thunderbird haircut—four passes with an electric shaver, to a quarter inch. Then we received a tetanus shot, plus any other shot we might need. They put eight of us in the back of a deuce and a half for a long ride to the 180th Infantry Regiments Medium Tank Company, which was about one-and-a-half miles behind the MLR. We were greeted by the company commander, who after his speech turned us over to the first

sergeant. The sergeant told us to turn in our M-1's to the supply sergeant, which brought a cheer from all of us. They were short of .45 caliber M-1911 pistols, but each of us were issued one when they became available. When each of us was assigned to a tank position on line, we received a .45 with shoulder holster.

As I rode in a jeep up to the front, a lot of emotions (including fear) ran through my mind. I would be assigned to the fourth platoon sergeant's tank as assistant driver.

On my first full day, I was given a tour by Master Sergeant Gibson, who had fought with Patton in the Second World War; his tank was named Ally Hoop IV. We walked up a bulldozed road to the tank position, and during the last seventy-five yards we were in plain view of Sandbag Castle and Able Hill. This area was known as Sniper Alley, so we didn't dally along.

Unless we were on alert, there were only two men per tank for firing missions; the loader and gunner. I asked the sergeant if all we did was sit in parked tanks. He informed me that this was what the war had come down too; that we were there to provide direct fire support for Fox Company of the 180th.

Each shift of two men was for two hours and it was now winter. The months of January and February reminded me of back home in Maine. Sitting in those tanks sure got cold. Just about every night, at a certain time of each hour, we had orders for H&E (Harassment and Enterdiction) fire. I had been paired up with Kadurna, the regular gunner. After firing the round, the brass 76mm casing would never touch the tanks floor. I would catch it and place it between my legs, sliding my mitten covered hands along it until the casing became cold. This was the best damn hand warmer I ever had. Only a few times did I ever let Kadurna warm his hands.

Fox Company had moved up the left finger of Able Hill on a contact patrol. The left and right fingers came together just below the top of the hill. The Chinese had a large bunker and caves that joined together there. We called this area the "Snake Pit."

Kadurna and I were on the 10:00 PM to midnight shift when Fox Company was ambushed just below the Snake Pit. As we were standing up in the turret, we could see flashes and hear the burp guns going off. About

that time the OP-3 called us on the phone, telling us he was in direct communication with the platoon leader who said they were pinned down and needed help. He wanted to know if our gun was sited in on the Snake Pit, and if we could see a grenade flash. Kadurna told him to try it. I was able to see it with my naked eye; Kadurna saw it through the gun scope and said, "I'm on it. Range 1000 yards."

The OP called asking for one round of HE (High Explosive), so Kadurna let go. Immediately, he called back saying the platoon leader was on target and needed three more so they could haul ass out of there. Kadurna fired them left to right, then waited. The OP called back letting us know the platoon had gotten out. Then he wanted to know if our 76mm was automatic, because he had never seen one fire that fast.

Needless to say, we had two of the biggest smiles you ever saw.

\* \* \* \* \*

I believe the combination of our gunners and the 76mm on our Sherman tanks were a deadly combination. We used it as a super sniper weapon. One night we took out a machine gun by just seeing the muzzle flash during a firefight. On several occasions we picked off the enemy as they dug, or crawled, in their trenches down from the Snake Pit.

The Chinese hated our tanks so much they fired mortars and recoilless rifles at them. On one occasion they connected, costing us two men. They were on duty and standing up in the two hatches when a mortar round hit the front slope of the turret; they never knew what hit them. I can still see their faces, but I can't remember their names.

\* \* \* \* \*

To our right front, on the edge of Punchbowl, was a high hill that we called "Joe Stalin." Every once in a while, when daylight came, the Chinese would be flying a hammer and sickle flag on a pole. After several attempts from 105mm artillery fire and the 90mm gun from a M-116 tank failed to knock it down, the OP-3 called us.

Sgt. Gibson wanted to direct the fire, because he had bet a bottle of whiskey that we could knock it down. While standing on the back deck with his binoculars, Kadurna informed him the range was 1900 yards, and

he was sighted on the bottom of the flagpole. Sarge gave the order, "Fire." When the dust settled, it was still there. So, the sergeant told Kadurna, "Right one, add one and fire." This time when the dust settled, we heard the OP-3 yelling over the phone, "Son of a gun, you got it! You got it!"

\* \* \* \* \*

It was late March, or early April, when Lt. Turner, the platoon leader, called me in and told me to pack my things. I was going down to our next tank position and take over as tank commander. At this time all ranks had been frozen, so here I was, a Private (E2), doing a sergeants job. However, sometime in April, Congress had appropriated more money and the ranks opened up. In August I made Sergeant First Class.

My new tank crew was William Fitzpatrick from Philadelphia, the best tank gunner I ever met. The loader was Slatter from upstate New York, and a college gymnast who would do back flips from the turret to the deck, then to the ground. The driver was Anthony Palumbo from Brooklyn, New York.

Our position was directly across from Able Hill and about eight-hundred yards from the bunker at Snake Pit. On the ridge running from Able to Sandbag Castle was a rock slab that resembled a tombstone. The Chinese would set up their recoilless rifle behind it and try to hit our tank, until we knocked it out.

Then one day the OP-3 called Fitz asking him if he could take out the tombstone with an APC (Armor Piercing Capped—also known as "shot"). Fitz said he could. He fired one round of HE to get the range, hitting the rock dead center. However, it hardly put a scratch on it. Then he called the OP, asking him which corner he wanted off first. Which the OP replied, "Just take it down."

When the dust settled the right corner was gone, and Fitz said, "Left corner next."

The OP said, "If you do that, I'll bring you a bottle of whiskey."

Next went the left corner, and Fitz said, "Here goes the middle," and it was gone.

I must say, that was some mighty good whiskey.

\* \* \* \* \*

The worse part about being on full alert was all four of us were in the tank. During one of these alerts, rumor had it the Chinese were coming after our tank. It turned out not to be a rumor. However, they went up the wrong finger. As they passed in front of the OP-3 bunker, an alert GI from Fox Company spotted them and emptied three, thirty round clips. The following morning they brought the three bodies down and they were loaded with anti-tank grenades. Needless to say, we were lucky that night.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the 27th of July, 1953, the truce ending the hostilities in Korea was signed. In October our Company Commander, Captain Heiser—a West Point graduate—assigned me to platoon leader. My platoon sergeant was SFC Chuck Meyers.

During one training exercise, we had to travel to the training area where we bivouacked overnight. We were glad to see the sun come up the following morning, because it had been a cold fall night. After passing through a small valley, five abreast, we fired at various targets before our final assault on a small hill. Captain Heiser was with a two-star general from Tenth Corps, and all his staff were parked in jeeps on a road that ran alongside the ridge line. During our maneuvers we had all the tank radios set on outside commo, so those observing could hear everything.

When it was over, I was informed the General wanted to see me at a tent that had been set up at the rear. The General wanted to see me—all I could thank of was that I was going to get an ass chewing. However, it turned out to be the opposite; I received a favorable critique of the exercise. He then asked if I planned to make a career out of the Army. I responded, “Right now, all I want to do is go home.”

In early December, I received orders to rotate home. I boarded the *MSTS General Walker* at Pusan for my voyage home. We spent Christmas and New Years on the ship, sailing under the Golden Gate Bridge on the 2nd of January, 1954.

On January 13, 1954, I was discharged from active duty.[\[11\]](#)

# *~~Seventy-Five~~*

## **Gordon Southern**

*180th Infantry Medium Tank Company*

*45th Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

I was born in Steele, Missouri in August of 1926. I was drafted in November of 1950. I entered the service at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri where I underwent my basic training.

After basic I was lucky enough to be sent to Leaders Course, which kept me from serving as an infantryman in the Korean campaign of 1951-52. This was a really bad time for casualties. Upon completion of this course, my CO talked me into accepting an offer for OCS at the Armored School in Fort Knox, Kentucky—which lasted for six months. Following school I served a short time at Fort Hood, Texas with the 317th Tank BN. Then, as a second lieutenant, I received orders for Korea.

\* \* \* \* \*

After arriving in Korea I was assigned to the 180th Infantry Medium Tank Company, 45th Infantry Division, as a platoon leader; later I became company commander.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the winter we had to run the tanks back and forward to keep the tracks from freezing to the ground. Plus, every two-or-three hours we had to start the engines to keep the old Ford liquid-cooled engines from busting their block—anti-freeze was scarce.

A tank test involves shooting, maneuvering, and communication. Tanks were used as pillboxes on the MLR, and could not be moved easily. The tests were given when we were back in reserve, in cooperation with combat engineers who built fortifications. During a particular training we

were near a Korean village, nestled among rice paddies and orchards. While some of the homes were still intact, the civilians had to be moved out. At times some of them tried to return, even at the risk of injury during the training exercises. It was the job of the M.P.'s to clear and secure these areas the days we were firing. I felt sorry for the locals who were relocated to an internment camp down the road; living in what amounted to be welfare.

Early one morning, a young Korean woman came into the training area leading a small girl while carrying a baby—papoose style—wrapped in a GI blanket around her shoulders. The first sergeant, along with a medic, brought her to my CP tent. Apparently, she had fallen and broken her right arm. I can still see her; her broken arm in a makeshift sling, made from a pair of GI underwear, as she used her good arm to adjust the baby.

The medic said it was a “green stick fracture.” I could see the bone protruding from the flesh. I called for one of our Korean laborers, who were working as a house boy, to translate for us. The little girl who was about three years old, with her tear stained cheeks, held tight to her mother’s skirt. Even though the medic had seen a lot of action, he was visibly upset over the young woman’s situation. He told me that we didn’t have the means to treat her properly, and the closest evac hospital was twenty miles away.

As I glanced between the sergeant and the medic, I realized there was little we could do. So, I asked the medic what we could do for her in the way of first aid. He said he could make her a splint and give her some APC’s, for the pain. I told him to do what he could, but our test was that day and we had to get to the firing range immediately.

I wish I could give a happy ending to this story, but I can’t. I have no idea of what happened to her and the little girl.

The following day we made a torturous road march back to the MLR.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was early March 1953, when my #5 tank was hit by a high explosive round from a flat trajectory 76mm anti-tank gun. It was a freak round that hit the elbow telescope sight, deflecting down into the fighting compartment. It burned, or destroyed, every piece of equipment inside the tank. Luckily the ammo that was stored under the floor did not detonate.

Usually five men are assigned to a tank crew; however, due to sick leave, R&R, or rotating home, we could usually afford only two men, which was the requirement. Two men had to be in the tank 24/7; one gunner and one loader. Luckily the tank crew suffered no casualties in this incident. One guy had gone over to the artillery FO's hut for a hot C-ration meal. The other one, PFC Henslin (as I recall), had a touch of diarrhea and had made a nature call to the slit trench. Both men were spared serious injuries, if not death; however, they were subject to court-martial. I didn't have the heart to press charges against them, but I did have to fill out a Korean Certificate of Loss for the tank.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lt. General I.D. White, commander of Tenth Corps, was a decorated tank hero from the Second World War and former commander of the Armored School at Fort Knox. He loved armor, but Korea's terrain wasn't good armor territory. Using my tanks, he performed an experiment using searchlights.

In the lower Chorwon area, the Marines had mounted searchlights on top of their tank guns. They were somewhat successful in blinding the enemy, but the enemy would knock them out with return fire, so the Marines ceased their use. However, the General heard about it and thought he knew a better way—we would use aerial searchlights.

It took a week to mount the lights, plus we had to install "Little Joe" generators to provide power for them. I received word from regiment that I was to be in one of the fourth platoons tanks, and General White would be monitoring the operation. They could not have picked a worse night for a demonstration. It was the first week of April and we were hit with a freak, but heavy, snowstorm.

Nothing was visible through the scope or the pistol port. The general told us to turn on the lights and fire two rounds. I got on the radio to the other tanks and gave the command, "Light up." The lights came on and you couldn't see anything past the end of the tube. It was a complete whiteout—absolute zero visibility. You can press your ear close to the receiver of an EE-8 and you can hear a tank gun fire even if the butterfly switch isn't activated. Knowing the general was listening, I said, "Two rounds on the way, sir." We couldn't see the bursts, even though the target was less than

eight-hundred yards away. The General wanted to know what it looked like out there. So, I told him I couldn't see a thing due to the snowstorm.

Being stubborn and not about to give up, the General instructed me to turn my searchlight on and have the other two tanks fire two rounds.

The radio network was open and anyone turning into that frequency could hear. What worried me was that if anyone was listening, they were laughing at this farce—at my expense.

At first the Chinese may have been surprised by our lights, and waste of ammo in the snowstorm—but not for long. The last two rounds fired brought out the enemy's full arsenal—it was just like a “turkey shoot.” Being apprehensive from the beginning, I made sure all the tanks were buttoned up tight when we began this odd mission.

Immediately, rounds from small arms started glancing off the turret while others ricocheted around the track sprockets and volute springs. Luckily we were not hit by any of the mortar or recoilless rifle fire that was striking within fifty yards of us. Their FO's weren't able to direct fire in the zero visibility, so they used their artillery sparingly. Sitting inside these tanks, the sound of the rounds striking the turrets were deafening. I intentionally left the butterfly switch on so the General could get an earful. He came over the radio saying, “This is Jade 6. Cease fire. End mission. We'll try this another time when visibility is better.”

Thank God, I had no casualties to report.

\* \* \* \* \*

As the regiment moved into Sandbag Castle, which was opposite of “Joseph Stalin,” we smeared mud on our tank markings, imposed radio silence, and took all precautions not to let the enemy know we had arrived. Under the cover of darkness we moved into our positions. Soon, every company along the front heard the following announcement, “Welcome men of Tank Company, 180th Regiment. We dedicate the following song to you.” The song, “There's no Tomorrow,” started blaring over loudspeakers. The troops broke out in laughter. Needless to say, there were no secrets on the front lines with all the “line crossers.” It was hard to tell a South Korean from a North Korean. A trooper from Arkansas had the solution; “If he says ‘ya'll’ you know he's a South Korean.”

\* \* \* \* \*

We were at Sandbag Castle when a North Korean soldier walked across the valley floor, through a heavy snow. Somehow the soldier was able to elude the Chemical Smoke Detachment and the infantry units in their trenches. The infantry had been in action all through the night, and they were tired and sleepy. After he had run eight-hundred yards across the valley and another hundred yards through the infantry, he was stopped by my platoon sergeant who was at the CP bunker. The North Korean had lost his cap, and his hair and scraggly beard, were weighted down with frost. And because he was breathing heavily, his white uniform was covered with the frozen mist from his breath. The sergeant brought him to the small opening of my sandbag CP and said, "Lieutenant, Lieutenant, look what I got!"

I unzipped my sleeping bag and ran outside, with one hand on my holstered .45. When I saw the two standing there, I drew my pistol, racked it back to put a round in the chamber, and pointed it at the prisoner's chest. (We didn't keep rounds in the chamber—it was too dangerous). The prisoner just knew I was going to execute him, and he began to sob. Falling to his knees, he repeatedly clapped his hands and chanted—begging for his life. Under these circumstances, one doesn't have to speak another man's language.

I had no plan of shooting him, but when he stopped clapping and reached inside his uniform, I debated whether or not to pull the trigger; he pulled out a "Safe Conduct Pass" leaflet. These had been dropped from our aircraft.

My platoon sergeant, being on the line for nine months, had earned his thirty-six points needed to rotate Stateside. During the Second World War he had been a Prisoner of War of the Japanese and was known to be anxious to get home. Leaving the prisoner with Sarge, I went outside and called headquarters on the EE-8 (hand cranked field phone) to report our prisoner.

This is where we screwed up. The General had wanted a prisoner for some time, but Sarge took his prize—in my jeep—back to the regiment. This was a huge no-no. We were providing support for the 1st BN, particularly Charlie Company, so he should have been our prisoner. Just imagine how difficult it must have been for the commander of Charlie

Company, and the 1st BN, to explain to the regimental commander how the first prisoner of 1953 came through their lines. Why do I still remember this? As a result, I received the biggest ass chewing of my career.

A call came in from the 1st BN Commander requesting my appearance at his CP—right away. Entering his bunker, I stood at attention with the proper hand salute. I waited for his return salute in accordance to proper military courtesy; it was a long time before I dropped my arm.

He wanted to know why the prisoner wasn't sent to him. I informed him that my platoon sergeant should not have taken the prisoner to regiment, and that I took full responsibility. Then he went into his tirade, calling me a "half-assed shavetail." He continued by saying we tankers were nothing but "glorified Patton's with that silly ass .45 pistol hangin' there in your shoulder holster." I told him I would write a letter of apology and that his headquarters should be credited for the capture. He informed me it was too late, because he was "the laughing stock of the whole friggin' division." Then he said, "Get the hell outta my hoochie!"

The following day the division G-2 brought the prisoner to my bunker asking me to help with the interrogation. We loaded him into an armored personnel carrier (half-track) and drove to a high knoll about fifty yards in front of the front lines. Here a Korean interpreter asked him to point out where their key positions were located across the valley. He complied and as he was pointing them out, we came under mortar fire. The G-2 signaled the interrogation was over and we got the hell out of there.

In about two weeks I received a courtesy copy of the intelligence report from division. Our prisoner was the last survivor of his machine gun squad that had been pounded all through the night by patrols supported by tank and mortar fire. He was a South Korean that had been stranded earlier by the yo-yo forces during the early part of the war, and he wanted to return to his family living near Taejon. I've often wondered if he made it home.

The battalion commander got over his anger, and we did favors for each other after this.

\* \* \* \* \*

In early 1953, while in the vicinity of Satae-ri, we had a patrol that came under fire. So, I directed the fire of the 76mm guns from two tanks in

front of the patrol. During this ordeal, SFC (William) Krilling received grenade fragments in both hips. However, he was still able to grab two Chinese burp guns. Even though he was wounded, with the use of a sound powered phone, he was able to relay to me the location of the enemy. I in turn, took his commands and relayed them directly to my gunner and loader, telling them when to fire, and how many rounds. Apparently, the enemy had taken shelter in a cave and due to Krilling's commands, we scored a direct hit.

On their way back down, Father Walsh carried out two men then went back to help carry a litter back down. He even took the time to stop and give last rites to the fallen Chinese soldiers.

Luckily for the platoon, half of the ammo for the burp guns was defective. A lot of the Chinese grenades were duds. If it had not been for this, casualties would have been a lot higher.

Since Krilling said our tanks saved their lives, he presented me with one of the burp guns. After getting it back home, it now is in the 45th Infantry Division's Museum in Oklahoma City.

I was ordered to attend a special awards ceremony at Regimental Headquarters sometime in early April. My jeep driver and I were the only ones invited from Tank Company. There were representatives from each company, and each battalion. During this ceremony, SFC Krilling was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Father Walsh was awarded the Silver Star.

While attending a mini-reunion with some of my tankers in Traverse City, Michigan, I learned that after the war, Father Walsh served as chaplain at the Dannemore State Prison—in New York. On May 3, 1977, he died of a heart attack.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days after the signing of the armistice, I was headed to Inchon to be processed home. Rumor was that the troopships had plenty of ice cream, gourmet meals, and even a midnight snack would be available.

The two day wait at Inchon was very unpleasant due to the stench of the mud flats that were exposed during low tide. The tidal range of thirty-

two feet, at Inchon, is one of the largest in the world. Still visible at low tide were rusty LST's, KCM's, and DUKW's.

There at Inchon is where I thought I would loose the burp gun presented to me by SFC Krilling. However, to my disappointment, before boarding the troopship *Nelson W. Walker*, I was given a new assignment; I was to be in charge of one-hundred six POW's. There were two other officers who were given the same number of prisoners to watch. Needless to say, since I was my own security officer, this is how I was able to get stateside with the burp gun.

Finally, the blessed day order came down—board ship. I was going home.[\[12\]](#)

## *~~Seventy-Six~~*

**Donald Albert**

*279th Infantry Regiment*

*45th Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

I was drafted on October 8, 1951. I reported to the draft board at the downtown post office in St. Louis, Missouri. There must have been one-hundred draftees present, with every fourth one in line being sent to the Navy. Since I never felt good aboard a ship in rough water, I was glad to have been third in line. So, off to the Army I went.

I boarded a train at the Union Station in St. Louis bound for Camp Clark, where I was inducted into the U.S. Army. Here I was given a uniform, a nice haircut, shots, and tests. Then again I was loaded onto a troop train headed for Camp Roberts, California; which was known for it's worlds largest parade ground.

Camp Roberts, which was located in the desert, was hot in the day and cold at night. With the daily temperature changes and all the mountains, this was a good place to train recruits headed for Korea. After completing basic training as a rifleman, I was recruited to go to leadership school. I was more than happy to attend the school, because I had received orders for Korea after basic. I was not your typical gung-ho soldier.

After completing the eight weeks of leadership school, I again received orders for Korea. However, an airborne recruiter told me if I signed up for airborne school he could get my orders cut. He went on to tell me that since none of the airborne divisions were in Korea, I would probably be assigned to a stateside division.

So, off to Fort Benning, Georgia I went. I remember the first two weeks of tower jumping was worse than actually jumping from a plane. My last jump was with a parachute that I packed the night before. Needless to say, I worried all night if I had packed it right. What a beautiful sight when

it opened. To my surprise, after graduation, we were the first class to receive orders to Korea.

\* \* \* \* \*

Arriving in Yokohama, Japan, we proceeded to the processing center at Camp Drake. We were to join the 187th Airborne RCT BN at Bibai, Japan. Four of us had children and we were told this was too high a risk unit, so we were removed from the group. However, one week later, the four of us were on our way to the front lines.

It was on the ship over to Korea that I learned a valuable lesson in life, from a priest aboard ship. He told us there was a time to pray, and a time to fight—together they don't mix. He went on to say, "Get yourself prepared for God now, and keep a clear head during battle to survive." During my time in Korea, I lived by those words. I never worried about being killed, or wounded, until the ending of the fighting; my main concern was not to be taken prisoner.

After landing in Inchon, Korea, we spent the next two days making our way to the front. On the last evening of our journey we had to climb a mountain to get to our new company. It was around midnight when we arrived at Company C, 279th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division.

After we reported in, I was picked to stand guard over the company CP bunker for the next three hours. It was a cool, windy night with a full moon. As the clouds drifted by, they created shadows that kept my tired mind on edge; everything seemed to be moving towards me. This was my first experience of front line duty, and definitely the longest three hours of my life. Luckily no one passed by me, because I'm sure I would have shot them—no matter which side they were on.

It was around 4:00 AM when I made it back to the CP to bunk down. However, I wasn't able to sleep from thinking what the next day was going to bring. Around 6:00 AM the sergeant called us outside to what was a rude awakening. The surrounding mountains were barren from bombings, then as far as one could see—a maze of trenches. Then there were the firing bunkers, and barbed wire strung everywhere. As I looked across the valley, the enemy side looked the same. It reminded me of movies I had seen about the trench warfare of the First World War.

I was assigned to the fourth platoon, or weapons platoon, as a squad leader of a 60mm mortar squad; I held this job until I rotated home.

Korea was a country that had four seasons; hot, rainy, cold and colder. During the rainy season, we were on the front line having replaced a ROK division. We lived in bunkers they had built, which began to cave in from all the heavy rains. Unfortunately, several men were killed during these cave-ins, so we were ordered to live in the trenches until the bunkers could be rebuilt. So, for close to a week, we lived in mud up to our ankles; I've seen hogs living in better conditions.

We never had on a dry stitch of clothing during the rainy season, which caused our skin to wrinkle from being constantly wet. Then came the winter; the temperatures in the mountains was so cold, your skin would crack open. We lost a lot of men with frostbit feet. They wore their thermal boots instead of their regular boots when walking, causing their feet to become warm, and wet, and then they would freeze when they stopped walking. This was extremely painful, but it was a fast ticket home.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you have been in combat, one thing you can never forget is the smell of death; it surrounds you and lives with you forever. I can still remember waking up one morning to that awful smell; there were several body bags outside my bunker waiting for Quartermasters men to pick them up and take them to be processed for their journey home. That was one job I would never want to have.

\* \* \* \* \*

For some reason, our company was assigned to outpost positions more times than being on the MLR. An outpost was on point in front of the front line, and was always the first to get hit in an attack. This let the troops on the MLR know that the enemy was on their way. One night we were at an outpost when we received word that a battalion size attack would happen sometime during the night. About dusk it started with artillery raining down on us. We were soon told that our outpost was surrounded—by the Chinese Mongolia Division.

Our fourth platoon took up their rifle positions defending the rear. That night “Hampton,” a Canadian who joined the Army at the age of sixteen and a gunner in my squad, and I must have thrown a case of grenades. From our foxhole, we threw them down the hill towards the flashes from the enemy’s rifles. The following morning we couldn’t tell if we had hit anything, since the Mongolia Division never left their dead or wounded behind—they were a first class unit.

Around midnight our first platoon had been hit hard and run over, causing a weak link in our circle. We were told help from the first platoon of Baker Company was on the way. About an hour later, we received a call from them saying they were in the trenches and didn’t know which way to go to get to the outpost. I was called to the CP and told that I needed to go bring them to the outpost, since I had the most experience of traveling the trenches.

I was pretty sure I knew where they were, but my biggest concern was if the Chinese were in the trenches between us. Gathering my .45 pistol and carbine with two banana clips, I headed back towards the MLR—alone. After traveling about one-hundred yards, I thought I could hear the enemy in the area, but they weren’t in the trenches. So, to be on the safe side, I crawled on my belly until I was sure I had passed them. Finally, I came upon what I knew was Baker Company’s first platoon, when someone shouts, “Halt, who goes there?” Oh, hell! Suddenly, I realized with all the excitement of the night, I never got the password. I replied back, “Don’t shoot. I’m Sergeant Albert with Company C and I don’t have tonight’s password. I’m from St. Louis, home of the Cardinals, and Browns baseball team” When I said “Browns” he started laughing, and said okay.

I told them we may have to pass the enemy on our way to the outpost, so if they had anything that made a noise to leave it behind. So, in the darkness of night, we took off and I wasn’t sure we were going the right way until I came to a Korean canvas shoe that I had passed on the way down. Finally, we arrived safely and they helped plug-up our weak positions.

After we got back the enemy didn’t bother us, but they went straight to the front line. We thought that on their way out they would overrun us and take prisoners. Someone must have been watching out for us, for it didn’t happen.

\* \* \* \* \*

One night I was smoking in the bunker and decided to go outside for some fresh air. Like a fool, I took the cigarette with me. I knew I could cup it in my hands, and show no light—what a dummy. As I took a drag, it must have lit up my face. The next thing I felt was sand spraying my neck, as a sniper round busted the sandbag next to me. This was the last cigarette I smoked until some ten years later. It was careless acts like that one—that we learned not to do in basic—that caused a lot of casualties in a war; I was one lucky fool.

\* \* \* \* \*

We were in reserve and after a hot shower and putting on clean underwear (which made you feel like a million dollars), I heard they were having mass in the mess hall bunker. During the mass, as the priest stood with his back to us, a bomb hit the rear of the bunker causing part of it to cave in. They didn't flinch a bit, and continued with the mass as if nothing had happened. Not me! Still shaking from the concussion of the bomb blast, I got out of there before another one hit.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the end of April, I was sent to Kokura, Japan for five days of R&R. I spent almost three days waiting for a telephone call to my wife Shirley to go through. During this time I was able to visit several Buddhist temples, some castles, gardens, and the Kokura United Nations Military Cemeteries where Korean laborers, in three days, moved the bodies of 864 fallen comrades to be shipped to Kokura for burial, before the arrival of Chinese Communist Forces.

When my R&R was over, I was flown to meet my outfit on the small island of Koje-do; here we guarded Chinese POW's for a month. When Joseph Stalin died, the prisoners held a funeral parade, marching around their compounds. As they marched, they chanted songs. They made large white wreaths from toilet paper, and bleached their uniforms white. Thinking there may be an uprising, we were put on twenty-four hour alert. However, after a couple of days, everything settled down.

Every sergeant was assigned a work detail of ten prisoners, who were building an airstrip on the island. My group was responsible for crushing rock used for the runways. When they got tired of loading rock and wanted to rest, which was usually half of the day, they overloaded the crusher to stop it. They knew they weren't allowed to put their hands in the crusher, so they watched me unload it while they rested. We weren't allowed to carry weapons while on our work details; however, we usually had three-or-four guards in each group for our protection.

Later that month, prisoners were exchanged for the first time during the war. This was such a huge event; news services from around the world were there to cover the exchange. Our company lined the dock as injured POW's passed by as they unloaded from ambulances, trucks, and buses. Suddenly, a sergeant from our company accidentally let off a burst of about ten rounds. Needless to say, the reporters hit the ground.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now we were back in Korea, in the area of Heartbreak Ridge, when the truce ending the fighting was signed. Just hours before the signing, our artillery fired several rounds into the enemy lines; which had to be the stupidest order ever given by a gung-ho officer. Guess what? They returned fire, not with several rounds, but what seemed to be around seventy rounds. There I was, lying on the ground in a bunker, wondering could I have survived all this time in Korea to get blown up because of a stupid order with only a few hours of fighting left.

At 10:00 AM on the morning of July 27, 1953, General Mark Clark signed the truce. It called for a twelve hour cease-fire before the truce went into effect at 10:00 PM. The following morning, both sides came out of their trenches waving at each other with clothing and flags—and joy. What an awesome sight too see, so many of them and so few of us.

I had enough points to rotate home, so two days later I was aboard a ship headed for home. After traveling twelve days on a ship, I then traveled another two days aboard a train bound for Camp Carson for processing. Then I flew home to meet Shirley and our son Karl, at the St. Louis airport—ready for civilian life.

# ~~*Seventy-Seven*~~

**Clyde Corsaro**

*5th RCT*

*U.S. Army*

My father had a job in Montreal, Canada, driving a cement truck. This is where I was born on March 12, 1932. After finishing the eleventh grade, I quit school. By the time I was seventeen, I figured I had already learned everything I needed to know. So in 1950, I started working at a paper mill in my hometown of Niagara Falls, New York.

When the North Korean Army crossed the 38th parallel—like everyone else—I was assigned the classification of 1-A by my local draft board. As of June 1951 I had not yet received my letter from President Truman, and I became panicky that my war was going to pass me by. So, I did a dumb thing—I volunteered for the draft.

After completing sixteen weeks of basic and advanced infantry training, at Fort Dix, New Jersey, I was given a two week furlough. On Good Friday 1953 at the end of my furlough, I boarded the *20th Century Limited* in Buffalo, New York. Not only was I excited about going to Korea, but for the first time in my life I was able to ride and sleep in a Pullman car. We arrived in Chicago the following morning and joined up with the rest of the troop train, which was attached to the back of a passenger train.

As we traveled to Seattle, on Easter Sunday, the officer in charge rounded us all up at a rest stop and offered us a chance to attend a non-sectarian service somewhere up the line. I believe the train stopped in Deer Lodge, Montana, and after we disembarked, we all lined up and marched to the church. The town looked like a set from a western movie; with the wooden church perched on a hill at the end of the town.

When the service ended, the lieutenant in charge told us that the town's people had gathered all their Sunday dinners, and picnic tables, at the train station. He went on to tell us since they were nice enough to share their

meals with us; we would parade down Main Street. No one had to tell us to look sharp!

Marching in a parade in my uniform, always brought me a sense of patriotism—even more so this time. I can still see veterans of the First and Second World Wars, in their American Legion hats, saluting us as we marched by. Not only had mothers and wives brought food, but they even brought their finest china and silverware. These people didn't know us, yet they gave us the dinners they had prepared for their own families; this made it taste better than any expensive meal in a fancy New York restaurant. At that time I was too macho to let anyone see me cry. However, several of the other guys must have gotten some dust in their eyes; for they were red and watery from trying to soothe the irritation.

To this day, on Easter Sunday, I remember that particular Easter, and what it meant to me and these other GI's.

\* \* \* \* \*

I arrived in Korea in late April 1953 where I was assigned to Charlie Company of the 5th RCT. At first I was a rifleman, then I was reassigned as a gunner on the 57mm recoilless rifle. While our trucks were delivering us to our drop off point for Christmas Hill, one slipped off the dirt road and crashed in the valley below. One GI was killed and several others were injured.

\* \* \* \* \*

We arrived at Outpost Harry on the 12th of June 1953, and that night we were greeted by a killing bombardment. I had just been relieved from guard duty, and along with two buddies, was huddled around a rifleman's firing pit that was just big enough to accommodate one man. I had just fallen asleep when the shelling started. My two buddies took possession of the firing pit and tried to get what little protection it provided. I tried to press my body into the forward wall of the trench, since the artillery and mortar fire was coming from that direction. I figured I was safer here than being out in the open. After what seemed like an hour, but was probably only about ten minutes, our medic, "Doc" Morton, came scurrying down the trench towards me. He shouted in my face, "Follow me."

This was my first experience of being seriously shelled by the enemy, and I was more than happy to obey his order. Doc and I piled into a machine gun pit that was about fifty yards away, and was already over occupied. Then it suddenly occurred to me that I had left behind my rifle, ammo, and backpack; basically everything needed to fight the enemy if they had gotten into the trenches. I felt safe enough because the company medic was with us. So, how could anything bad happen?

Sometime during the night the shelling finally stopped, and we were able to get some sleep. The following morning we prepared to relieve whoever was left at the outpost. We drew our ammunition and grenades, and then my platoon was taken to the rear of the outpost. The rumors about the number of casualties were not far from the truth. American bodies were stacked up like wood going to a sawmill; both American and Chinese bodies were lying around the trenches and along the road that followed the stream down to the aid station. However, this didn't bother me as much as seeing body parts strewn about.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had already seen action on Outpost Harry before our outfit—Charlie Company—of the 5th RCT relieved the ROK unit on Christmas Hill, in late June of 1953. We had only expected to be there a short time, so we only brought minimum supplies for two or three days. Our main concern was our weapons, grenades, and ammo for our squad weapons. On our climb up the hill, it had rained hard and as I took a huge step, trying to keep my 57mm recoilless rifle from getting dirty, my GI boxers ripped. Needless to say, we didn't take along extra pairs of boxers. So, for the next six weeks I wore a pair of boxers that were ripped from the waist to the crotch.

One of the things we didn't take along were the brushes used to clean our weapons. Now we had to decide which was more important; oral hygiene or weapon maintenance. Our toothbrushes were now used on our weapons, not our teeth.

The trenches that had been dug by the ROK were for “munchkins” and provided no cover for a grown man. We had to remedy this. I remember digging next to a guy who was about to rotate home. As we dug he picked up a Chinese stick grenade, and after examining it, without saying a word pulled the ring out of the handle and handed to me. I will never forget the

terror that ran through my body; I didn't know whether to "shit or go blind." Suddenly, I remembered what they taught us in basic training—I threw it down over the hillside. When it didn't explode, I noticed the guy was lying in the trench laughing so hard he almost busted a gut. After he was able to compose himself, he explained that he had noticed the string had rotted through, and pulling the ring out wouldn't activate the fuse. Needless to say, after my embarrassment had passed, we had a good laugh.

\* \* \* \* \*

After the truce had been signed, our outfit was removed from Christmas Hill and we set up camp in reserve, in the Chorwon Valley.

In the beginning of 1954, the 5th RCT was sent to the island of Koje-do, where two days later I rotated home.

## *~~Seventy-Eight~~*

**Wayne Pelkey**

*180th Infantry Regiment*

*45th Infantry Division*

*U.S. Army*

I was born in Barre, Vermont on November 6, 1931, the second of three children. Growing up during the depression, we lived in Websterville, Vermont, which was a quarry town where most of the small homes were owned by the granite companies.

After graduating from Spaulding High in 1949, I was unable to use my scholarship to the University of Vermont, as my father had a stroke. I felt that my family needed me at home, so I got a job at the quarry. Then on November 11, 1952, (Armistice Day, which is now Veterans Day) I was drafted—what irony.

I was inducted into the U.S. Army at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and then I was sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for my sixteen weeks of basic training. At the end of training I was given four days at home then I took a plane from LaGuardia to Chicago. There I met the troop-train bound for Fort Lewis, Washington.

\* \* \* \* \*

After arriving in Korea, in April 1953, I was sent to the replacement center at Chunchon. It was here that I was assigned to Fox Company, 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division.

\* \* \* \* \*

On July 15, 1953, while on Christmas Hill, we came under heavy fire. Daylight broke the following morning and there in front of my trench laid countless dead Chinese. It was against my moral character to scrounge through the pockets of a dead enemy soldier. However, one of my

KATUSA's—Lee Bong Sun—checked the pockets of a dead Chinese who was almost in our bunker.

He found a coin, and then he removed his watch. As I looked at the watch, which was an Elgin, it had the initials "A.L." engraved on the back. It had to have belonged to a fallen GI, which made me angry. However, I stopped any further searching of the enemy dead. I was still upset from losing three of my men during the night, along with my brains still rattling from a concussion I received during a mortar shelling.

While we were still under fire, I remember Father Walsh going down the finger trenches of Outpost Queen, giving communion and last rites. On the sixteenth he gave everyone—Catholic, Protestant, Jew, KATUSA, even the agnostic—communion. When he saw that I had been wounded, he embraced me and said, "Peace to you son, our Lord will always take care of you." He did, and still is.

\* \* \* \* \*

On August 1, 1954, I left Pusan, Korea aboard the troopship *General John Pope*, which was carrying 3600 troopers home.

I was discharged from service on the 17th of August, 1954.

# *~~Seventy-Nine~~*

**Robert Ericson**

*1st Marine Division*

*U.S. Marine Corps*

As battalion bugler for the 1st Marine Division, I participated in Little Switch, which was the first prisoner exchange of the war. On April 26, 1953, at Freedom Village at Panmunjom, an exchange of wounded and sick prisoners took place. I helped serve as a stretcher bearer unloading the ambulances.

On July 27, 1953, I was at the United Nations Headquarters for the truce negotiations when the cease-fire agreement was signed. The signing took place at 10:00 AM, followed by a twelve hour artillery barrage. Then at 2145 hours the firing stopped, and for the next fifteen minutes we all held our breath expecting a renewal of firing—nothing happened.

I then directed my bugle over the camp and played Taps, signifying that the firing had stopped and that the truce was in effect.

\* \* \* \* \*

In honor of playing the bugle at the truce talks, I was invited to Washington D.C., on July 27, 1995 to be the official bugler for the dedication of the National Korean War Memorial. In commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the cease-fire, I was invited to Korea to again play Taps at Panmunjom.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have played the bugle now for sixty-five years, and have played Taps for over six-thousand Military Funerals.

## *~~Eighty~~*

### **Where Are They Now**

**George Weidensall** – After George left the service, he worked as a machinist. Eventually, he went into management and sales. The last fifteen years of his working career, he went into construction. This way he would stay in shape physically, for motorcycle racing. After reaching the age of seventy, he retired from work.

He lives in Beckley, West Virginia.

**Raymond Fish** – The first year after his discharge, Raymond worked for the Ashland Oil Company in Canton, Ohio. It was during this time he married a girl from his high school class. Their marriage produced five children.

In the fall of 1953, Raymond enrolled in The Ohio State University, where he graduated in 1959 with a degree in DVM. After thirty-six years of practice, he retired.

After his wife passed away, he remarried. He currently lives in Winchester, Virginia.

**Richard “Dick” Franklin** – Last known, Dick was living in Waco, Texas.

**Joseph Marlett** – While at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Joseph retired from the U.S. Army in 1968. He took a job as manager at the South Park Country Club in Fairdale, Kentucky. Two years later he went to work at International Harvester in Louisville, Kentucky.

In 1976 he purchased a small farm near Marysville, Indiana where he lived for twenty-three years until his wife, Margaret, passed away.

He remarried Marita King-Phipps in 2001, sold his farm, and moved to Wentzville, Missouri. There they live today.

**Harold Selley** – Harold was assigned to the Medical Department of the Recruiting Station in Indianapolis, Indiana. After he was discharged, he stayed in Indianapolis and attended Butler University. There he received a B.S. Degree. He then went on to Illinois Wesleyan University, where he obtained his masters in Chemistry.

While teaching high school science in Illinois, he met and married another teacher. In 1962 they moved to Florida where he taught chemistry and physics. After retiring from the public school system, Harold taught eleven years in a Christian high school in St. Petersburg. He taught for a total of forty-three years.

He does Christian volunteer work.

He and his wife have five children. Currently they live in Punta Gorda, Florida.

**George Porter** – Last known, George is living in Florida.

**Robert “Bob” Bouterse** – Robert passed away on April 9, 2010 at Bay Pines, Florida.

**Fred Connolly** – Fred was discharged from the U.S. Army on August 4, 1952. After working for the New York Transit Police thirty-eight years, he retired.

After retiring, he and his wife moved to Turnersville, New Jersey. They have one son and one daughter.

**Richard “Joe” Johannes** – After leaving the Army in 1953, Joe attended the adult education program to complete high school. In 1955, he re-enlisted. After two tours in Viet Nam and three tours in Germany, he retired as a Master Sergeant on July 30, 1980. He had twenty-eight and a half years of service.

He went to work for the Civil Service and retired in 1985 as a G-11 Training Supervisor.

He and his wife live in Lawton, Oklahoma.

**Jack Anderson** – Jack retired from the Army with twenty-four years of active service. He retired with the rank of MSGT. After retiring, he took a job as a firefighter, which he did for fifteen years.

He and his wife Betty live in Everett, Washington. They have two sons and one daughter.

**Dillon Staas** – After leaving the Army, Dillon attended college for two years. He went to work at a shop until he landed a job with the postal service. There he held the positions of clerk, clerk foreman, route examiner, carrier foreman, and Postmaster of a small town post office, before retiring.

He and his wife have been married fifty-eight years and have eight children. They live in Lima, Ohio.

Dillon enjoys writing poems, of which some are in various publications.

**Lloyd Paul Summers** – After being discharged from the USMC, Paul returned home to Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. Here he went to work at the Letterkenny Army Depot. After working for thirty-seven and a half years, he retired in 1984.

His wife Doris passed away in 2001. They have three daughters.

He still resides in Waynesboro and is active in his church.

**Robert “BJ” Johnson** – A month after returning from Korea, he and Arlee Curtice were married. He worked for thirty-seven years in the wholesale automotive industry. Then he worked in the National Parks for eleven years. His last five years of work was in the tourist industry.

After retiring, he and Arlee moved to Meza, Arizona, where they live today.

**Carroll Everist** – After leaving the Army, Carroll attended Hamilton School of Commerce in his hometown of Mason City, Iowa. He became a bookkeeper. However, he only did this for a short time before re-enlisting on February 28, 1954. He was sent to cook school at Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Due to being an ex-POW, the Army wasn't able to send him overseas, so they put him on medical retirement.

After two years of being a hotel cook, he became a door-to-door insurance salesman. However, he would later become an ordained minister, where he pastored in Indiana, Illinois, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas.

He and his wife Dixie make their home in Mulvane, Kansas. They have three daughters and one son.

**Joseph Lloyd Wosser, Jr.** - In August of 1944, he married MaryHelen Brother. In 1963, he retired from the USMC as a Lt. Colonel. His last duty was in the Office of Naval Research, where he worked on some of the first technical papers on the GEM (Ground Effect Machine), or the hovercraft.

He and MaryHelen live in Lincoln, California. They have four daughters.

**Eric Hanney** – Eric passed away on August 22, 2010 in Thousand Oaks, California.

**Tom Enos** – In January of 1952, Tom was released from active duty from the Marine Corps. In August of that year, he married his high school sweetheart—Doris Hauptfueherer.

Tom returned to college at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California, where he graduated with a B.S. Degree in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineering. After working in the air conditioning and refrigeration industry for nearly thirty-seven years, he retired.

He and Doris live in Laughlin, Nevada. They have four sons and one daughter.

**Forrest O'Neal** – On September 20, 1952, while still in the Marine Corps, Forrest and Alice Gray were married in Little Rock, Arkansas. After leaving the Corps, he attended college on the GI Bill.

Receiving two degrees in education, he taught and coached for thirty-three years in Missouri. He then worked for the State of Missouri, in Jefferson City, for eleven years.

He and Alice live in Rolla, Missouri. They have one daughter.

**Victor Shepherd** – Victor went back to Akron, Ohio after leaving the Corps and went to work in a lab at a local hospital. There he met his future wife. After they were married they moved to southern California so Victor could go back to school.

After his wife became ill, he left school and got a job as a senior chemist in a research lab. He transferred to New Jersey, and then a year later transferred to Cincinnati, Ohio. Here he was responsible for sales in thirty-three states, and had five distributors working for him.

When he reached the age of sixty-three in 1995, he retired.

He still resides in Cincinnati.

**Robert Harbula** – After leaving the Corps, he tried to get a job as a security guard at a local atomic energy plant. However, he was turned down because he was only twenty-one. The job required for one to be twenty-five. It didn't matter that for the past four years of his life he had guarded the President at different functions, and at Shangri-La (now Camp David), along with being a machine-gunner in five campaigns of the Korean War. So, he worked in the financial industry for twenty years and owned a sales franchise for another twenty years.

He and his wife, of fifty-six years, live in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania. They have four daughters and one son.

**Jack Chapman** – In January of 1955 Jack tried to re-enlist in the Army, but failed the physical. So, he tried the Air Force and was successful. While in the Air Force, he finished high school and four years of college.

He retired from the Air Force and accepted an administrative position at a college. Where he taught Law Enforcement and was the colleges Police Chief. Twenty-one years later, he retired.

He and his wife live in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

**Rex Raymond** – Last known, Rex was living in Washington.

**Robert Grass** – After leaving the Marine Corps, he returned to Evansville, Indiana and returned to work at A.D.T. Robert worked there until November of 1959, then he entered the ministry.

He and Vernia live in Owensboro, Kentucky. They have four daughters.

**Brooks Outland** – He retired from the U.S. Navy on November 1, 1973, as a Senior Chief Yeoman. He then went to work in the U.S. Government Civil Service, as Manpower Analyst, in Pensacola, Florida. Brooks was responsible for projecting total number of students and support personnel for all Navy training commands. In 1976 he retired.

He lives in Hawaii, where he is Supervisor of Volunteers aboard the *USS Missouri*.

**Janice Feagin Britton** – Using the GI Bill, Janice attended Boston University where she received her Masters and Post Masters Degree. She took a job at Pensacola Junior College, where she organized an Associate Degree Nursing Program—the first in the state of Florida.

She then went to Battle Creek, Michigan, where she did the same. Three years later, Janice moved to Mobile, Alabama. Here she volunteered as a Presbyterian Medical Missionary and went to Campinas, Brazil for three years.

After returning stateside, she accepted a position at a predominantly Black College to start a program for LPN's, who wanted to become RN's. The college was under a court order to integrate and have more white students.

Since her retirement in 1982, she lived in Africa while working for the Peace Corps.

She currently lives in Spanish Fort, Alabama.

**Charles Toole** – He retired in October of 1967, after twenty-fours of military service. He then moved to Pompano Beach, Florida where he went to work for the Fannie May Candy Company. He was the company's Florida representative. They were headquartered in Chicago. In 1991 he transferred to the home office and retired.

He and Jan, currently live in Wausau, Wisconsin. They have four daughters.

**Douglas Voss** – After retiring from the U.S. Navy in 1969 he moved to Jacksonville, Florida. In 1970 he went to work for the U.S. Postal Service in the accounting and financial department. After twenty years, Douglas retired.

He still resides in Jacksonville, Florida.

**Mario “Tony” Faiella** – After leaving the Marine Corps, Tony and his brother went into a partnership. They bought a garage business. Six years later, Tony had his back fused. He then became a Sheriff's Deputy/Jailer and attended a criminal justice school where he obtained an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice. For fourteen years he was a North Carolina Magistrate in Carteret County.

He does volunteer work at the senior center helping with Meals on Wheels.

He lives in Hampstead, North Carolina. Tony has one daughter.

**Raymond Cesaretti** – When Raymond left the Marine Corps he attended college where he graduated with a degree for an elementary school teacher. He taught fifth, seventh, and eighth grades. After teaching for thirty-four years, he retired in 1989.

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings, he swims a mile at a local gym.

He and his wife currently live in Eureka, California.

**Floyd “Gene” Combs** – After retiring from the U.S. Navy in 1967, Gene moved to central Florida where he leased several gasoline stations. He ran a service station training center for an Arkansas oil company. When it merged with a major company, he went to work for the state of Florida in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Then in 1980 he worked a few years in the real estate business, but decided to retire when he reached the age of sixty. However, a few months after retiring, he went to work at a local electric power company in their security department. Reaching the age of seventy-one, he retired for good.

He and Wanda live in Deltona, Florida. They have four sons and one daughter.

**Donald Thomas** – After twenty years of service, Donald retired from the U.S. Army in 1967. Under the GI Bill he completed two years of college. For the next twenty years, he worked as an insurance claims adjuster for the California State Auto Association in Merced, California.

In 1984 he began to write about his experiences in Korea. After retiring, he continued to write. During the summer of 2003, Donald began writing weekly for the California Mid-Valley Publications, Merced, Atwater, and Winton Times Newspapers.

He still resides in Merced, California.

**John Rick Kennedy** – In 1953, he received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marketing from Indiana University. After graduating he went to work for the Reynolds Metal Company in Louisville, Kentucky. He worked there until 1962 at which time he went to work for the R.C. Can Company. From 1968 until 1999 he worked for Tenneco Packaging (formerly known as Owens-Illinois).

He retired to Orange Port, Florida, where he lives today. He has seven children.

**Byron Dickerson** – After his discharge, Bryon moved to Dallas, Texas. There he met his future wife (they have been married fifty-seven years). He retired in 1986 from the U.S. Postal Service, after thirty-three years of employment.

He and his wife live in Duncanville, Texas. They have one son and one daughter.

**Donald Barton** – Donald passed away on May 14, 2010 in Portland, Oregon.

**Ernest Everett Edge** – Killed in Action on May 18, 1951.

**John Ebnet** – He returned to Holdingford, Minnesota after his discharge from the Army. John returned to work at the same hardware store he was working at when he was drafted. A year later the owner of the store passed away and his widow gave John first chance to buy it. So, he and his wife borrowed the money from her uncle. In 1997 they retired from the store. Ten years later, John's wife passed away.

He still lives in Holdingford. They have two sons.

**Delbert Rice** – He was discharged on July 5, 1953. The following day, he and Shirlene Fuchs were married. They moved to Evansville, Indiana, where he went to work for the Servel Company.

In 1955, Delbert and his family moved to Fordsville, Kentucky, where he took a job with the U.S. Postal Service. After forty years as a rural mail carrier, he retired in 1995. When he retired, his route was over 120 miles long.

He and Shirlene live in Fordsville, Kentucky. They have three sons.

**Fred Redmon** – Fred passed away on February 17, 2009 in Lake Havasu, Arizona. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

**William McCraney** – After leaving the service, William returned to college to complete his education. While attending college he met Laurie, a lovely student nurse. When they both graduated, they married. He went to work for the USDA and after thirty-five years, he retired.

He and Laurie live in Bartow, Florida. They have one son and one daughter.

**Richard Esser** – After leaving the Navy, Richard started his own business—Dick Esser Plumbing and Heating, Inc. His two sons, and their wives, took over the business after he retired.

He lives in Lorain, Ohio.

**Howard Camp** – He was discharged from the U.S. Army on October 8, 1952. On November 21, 1952, he married Phyllis Scott.

He worked for the National Cash Register Company in Dayton, Ohio, until 1975. Then he went to work for the U.S. Postal Service as a letter carrier. In December of 1991, he retired.

On October 10, 2006, Phyllis passed away.

He resides in Xenia, Ohio. They had one son and one daughter.

**Rexford Glass** – He arrived home, in Gas City, Indiana, on Christmas Eve 1952. On January 26, 1953, he married and returned to work at Owens-Illinois Glass Company. His marriage ended in 1959 due to his nightmares of Korea. They had three daughters and one son.

He remarried in 1972 and moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana. After thirty-seven years of marriage, she passed away on January 30, 2009.

In 1982 he retired from Owens-Illinois Glass Company.

He still resides in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

**Raymond Reilly** – After returning home, Raymond went back to work in the mines. He drove trucks and operated a front-end loader. He married his high school sweetheart and they had two daughters.

He currently resides in Aristes, Pennsylvania.

**David Lopez** – After working as a Longshoreman, a drop forge operator, and a drop hammer operator, he traveled to the east coast to learn meat cutting. Unfortunately, the ice boxes were bad for his health. So, he returned to California and went into the lawn care business. At the age of sixty-two, and working for thirty years, he retired.

He lives in Torrance, California.

**Charles Bracey** – Charles passed away on March 13, 2008, in Aberdeen, North Carolina.

**Albert Field** – He spent the first two years, after leaving the service, doing odd jobs. Then one day Albert received a called from one of the guys he went through basic training with. He wanted to know if Albert was interested in driving his father's dump truck while he was recuperating from surgery. He took the job until his buddy's father returned. Liking it so much, he bought a truck and became an owner/operator.

Albert married his buddy's sister and they have been married for thirty-five years. They have five children. They live in Cherry Valley, California.

**Kenneth Flynn** – Kenneth passed away on September 29, 2009 in California City, California.

**Donald Degood** – After returning home, Donald married. They have two daughters.

He retired after selling insurance for thirty years. He is active in volunteer work. By 2009 he had amassed over 4,000 hours at Memorial

Hospital.

He currently lives in Marysville, Ohio.

**Otto White** – After leaving the service, Otto married Geraldine Johnson of Capron, Illinois. He went to work at Woodward Governor Company, where he was a tool machinist. After twenty-three years, he went into his own business. However, two years later he went back to industrial work. Nine years later, he retired.

He and Geraldine live in Loves Park, Illinois. They have one daughter.

**Alfred Eckhart** – In October of 1952, Alfred returned stateside. On December 5, 1952, he married his sweetheart, Nola Ann.

After leaving the service, he went to work for Firestone Tire & Rubber Company. He eventually went to work for Tyres International of Columbus, Ohio. He retired after with forty years of service.

He and Nola live in Canal Winchester, Ohio. They have two sons and one daughter.

Nola said even Alzheimer's can't keep Alfred from remembering the horrendous fighting, and death toll on Porkchop Hill.

**George DeSha** – He went to work for a lumber company in Florida after leaving the Marine Corps. George worked there for three years, and then he went into construction building houses. He joined the local fire department and after eight years, became the Fire Chief.

He and his wife moved to Michigan, where he continued working in the construction industry.

He currently resides in Traverse City, Michigan.

**Morton "Pete" Wood, Jr.** - Pete passed away on August 10, 2009 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

**Anthony “Tony” Gurule’** – After leaving the service in 1953, Tony went back to sea with the Merchant Marines. After doing this for a year and attending college for a year, he returned to his earlier profession of baker. He worked as a foreman for Safeway Stores bakery division, in Richmond, California until 1968. In 1959 he married and had three children.

Then he went to work for the Governor of California—Ronald Reagan—for five years. After obtaining his Real Estate license, he sold real estate in California until 1979.

In 1977 he remarried and moved to New Mexico. There he continued to sell real estate. After starting a small carpet business, he retired in 2005.

He and his wife live in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

**Marvin Totland** – The wounds he received during the war prevented him from doing any hard labor work that he had been accustomed to before the war. So, he went to school. During his second year of college, he married his wife Addie. After college he went to work for the Polar Telephone Company in North Dakota. Then he went to work for the Federated Telephone Cooperative in Chokio, Minnesota.

Six years later he was offered a job with the Rural Electrification Administration, an agency of the federal government. In 1990, after thirty-one years of service, he retired.

He and Addie live in Alexandria, Minnesota. They have one son and one daughter.

**David Hughes** – Last known, David was living in Colorado.

**Stanley Grogan** – After leaving the service in 1953, he maintained his commission and aeronautical rating in the Air Force Reserve. Stanley’s regular employment was with Central Intelligence.

In later years he had a career as an educator. After retiring, he still assists students in becoming academically proficient, so they can get into the colleges of their choice.

He and his wife live in Pinole, California.

**Calvin Harwick** – He returned to his hometown of Rochester, Minnesota after leaving the service. There he returned to the same company he worked for before entering the Army. After working there for twenty years, in the electrical repair shop, the company was sold.

Calvin then went to work for a large company, in their electrical maintenance department. After working there for twenty-fours, he retired.

He still lives in Rochester, Minnesota.

**Melbourne Leroy Rogers** – After leaving the service, he went back home to Maryville, Tennessee. Leroy went to work for Alcoa. Being laid-off several times, in 1957 he went to work as an insurance agent.

He and Fay still live in Maryville. They have two sons.

**Mark Pease** – While he was stationed at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, he met a girl while on pass. They have been married for fifty-seven years.

Mark worked his way through college and went to work as an Engineer. He worked for Jered, designing equipment for ships (mostly Navy). At one time there were over 300 ships, including eleven aircraft carriers, at sea that had equipment which he had designed.

After thirty-six years, he retired in 1995 as Manager of Engineering.

He and his wife live in Newburgh, Indiana. They have two daughters.

**Paul Elkins** – After leaving the Army, Paul returned to college where he graduated in 1957 with a B.S. Degree in Electrical Engineering. During his career he worked for four different companies in Idaho, New Mexico, and Nevada. In his thirty-three years, he worked in the electronics field designing electronic equipment.

In the mid-1960's he drifted into the mini-computer field; first as a hardware designer, then into software. In January of 1990, he retired from Los National Laboratory in New Mexico.

He now lives in Kasilof, Alaska.

**Dr. William Latham** – After returning from Korea in mid-October 1952, he married Carol Roddick. They were married on November 8, 1952, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

In 1954 he joined a family practice and surgery practice in his hometown of Stockton, California. He retired from family practice in 1994 and surgery practice in 2009.

He lives in Stockton, California. They have three children.

**Roger Lueckenhoff** -He was discharged from the Army on September 26, 1952. On November 10, 1952, Roger went to work for the Rawlings Sports Goods Company, in St. Louis, Missouri. In February of 1953, he married.

While working at Rawlings, he attended Washington University on the GI Bill. He obtained an Associates Degree in Industrial Management. In 1976, Rawlings transferred Roger's department to a plant in south central Missouri. So, he and his family moved to Rolla, Missouri.

In 2003 his wife, Lorene, passed away. They have two sons and one daughter.

He still lives in Rolla, Missouri.

**Dick Thune** – Last known, Dick was living in Plainview, Minnesota.

**Kenneth Whitehouse** – After returning home, Kenneth went back to work at Wetzels—a local grocery store in Owensboro, Kentucky. A few years later, he went to work for the U.S. Postal Service, where he worked until his retirement.

He currently resides in Owensboro, Kentucky.

**John Delaney** – After he retired from the U.S. Navy in 1971, he returned to Albany, New York. There he was hired as a vice president of an upstate hospital. In 1987, John retired.

He and his wife, Marge, who was a Navy Nurse in Korea, moved to Minden, Nevada. They have one son and one daughter.

**Robert Bickmeyer** – After leaving the service in 1953, he returned to his old job at General Motors. With thirty-nine years of service, Robert retired in 1986.

He and his wife, Phyllis, live in Troy, Michigan. They have four children.

**Peter Beauchamp** – In June of 1955, Peter was discharged from the Marine Corps. He attended school under the GI Bill, taking mechanical drafting and machine design.

Upon finishing school, he went to work for RCA. He eventually ended up working for the Harris Corporation in Palm Bay, Florida. While there he worked on many government and military projects, including Apollo, the Space Shuttle, and the B-1 Bomber.

After working at Harris for twenty-three years, he retired.

He married in 1958 and has two sons and one daughter.

He still resides in Palm Bay, Florida.

**Ronald Hale** – After spending a year in the hospital for his wounds received in Korea, he went home to El Paso, Texas. Here he went into the cafe business. However, not caring for the cafe business, he closed his shop and moved to Dallas. There he went to school.

For twenty years he was a mechanic, and then he opened his own shop. Eventually he sold his shop and retired.

He currently lives in Red Oak, Texas.

**Charles Klenklen** – When he returned home, he went back to his old job as a receiving room operator in a milk processing plant. He also worked as a truck driver salesman for a welding supply company. Eventually he went into business for himself, as an auto mechanic.

He married after returning home from Korea. In 1981, his wife Flora passed away. They have two daughters and one son.

He remarried in 1991 and lives in Fort Scott, Kansas.

**Dr. John Laura** – Being discharged from the Army, he returned home and married his college sweetheart. He went on to set up his dental practice in Syracuse, New York.

During their first year of marriage they had triplet sons. The following year, their daughter was born. His daughter became a dentist and eventually took over his practice.

In 2008 his wife of fifty-three years passed away.

He still resides in Syracuse, New York.

**Chuck Gibbs** – Last known, Chuck was living in San Antonio, Texas.

**Jerry Cunningham** – On October 1, 1988, he retired from the Army as a First Sergeant.

In 1989 he worked as an Optical Lab Tech with an optical company in Columbia, South Carolina. After working here for eight years, he retired in 1997.

He currently lives in Columbia, South Carolina.

**Donald “Hank” Nicol** – After leaving the service, he attended Brooks Institute of Photography. Hank ended up in New Zealand, where he worked for a year as a welder. Then he headed to Sydney, Australia—for four years.

Finally, he returned to the states to get a degree from San Francisco State. After listening to President John F. Kennedy, he joined the Peace Corps and headed to Thailand. While there he married a Thai lady and brought her back to California. They had two children, and then divorced.

He worked as a California State Park Ranger. Now he dabbles in amateur photography.

He lives in Eureka, California.

**William Warren** – On January 13, 1954, William was discharged from the Army with the rank of M/Sgt. He went to work for the L.C. Andrew Co, for four years. After which he worked for twelve years at Plaster Mason. Then for the next twenty-one years, he worked for S.D. Warren Company. On January 1, 1988, he retired.

He has two children, a son and daughter, and three step-children.

He currently resides in Sanford, Maine.

**Gordon Southern** – He is a full-time farmer, producing rice, wheat, soybeans, and corn. His rice fields produce 150 bushels of long grain rice per acre.

He lives in Steele, Missouri.

**Donald Albert** – He went to work for the Peverly Dairy Company, as a home deliveryman, after his discharge from the Army. Soon afterwards the dairy industry began to sell milk, in paper cartons, to Super Markets for half the price, ending the home delivery service.

A friend of his was able to get him an interview at Cargill, Inc., selling Nutrena Livestock Feeds. Out of the two-hundred salesmen that Nutrena had, Albert was in the top ten.

After advancing through several management levels, he retired in 1992.

He and Shirley live in Warrensburg, Missouri. They have eight children.

**Clyde Corsaro** – Clyde passed away on May 25, 2010 in Syracuse, New York.

**Wayne Pelkey** – He returned home to work in the quarries after leaving the service. He soon found that working in the pit with a 55lb jackhammer was very tiring. Luckily, management gave him a job in maintenance and driving a dump-truck.

The second year after being home he was having sleepless nights, which was taking a toll on him. So he took up flying, which he had started before being drafted.

In 1957 he was promoted to Safety Director of four operations. Then in 1959 he married Irene Fontana, and was promoted to Director of Purchasing.

In 1984 the company was bought out, so he took early retirement.

He resides in Barre, Vermont.

**Robert Ericson** – Last known, Robert was living in Illinois.

## ***Acknowledgements***

First and foremost, I want to give a heartfelt thanks to the individuals who shared their experiences for this project. Also, I would like to thank them, and other veterans, for their service so we may enjoy the freedoms that we have today. To the families that lost loved ones; thank you is not enough.

I want to thank the principal of Hancock County (Kentucky) Middle School, Gina Biever, for asking teachers if they would be willing to proof read my manuscript. In which Donna Popham so graciously volunteered. She herself had a special interest in the Korea War. Her uncle Charles Whitler, of the 8th Cavalry Regiment, was listed as Missing in Action during the battle of Unsan, North Korea on November 2, 1950. From DNA samples provided by family members, his remains were positively identified in June of 2010. His remains were brought home and laid to rest on September 2010.

For providing me with a list of men from Item Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry that were Prisoners of War, I want to thank Jack Chapman. Without it, I would never have been able to find Newton Duke; the gentleman who was with Ernest Everett Edge the day he was killed in action, who provided me with details of that day.

For the use of the letters written home by Ernest Everett Edge, I want to think the Edge Family; his siblings, James, Mary, Homer, Denzil, Irvin, and Margaret.

To Dianne Abshire, thank you for being the contact person for George Porter.

Thanks to Krista Hill, Rosalie White, and everyone at iUniverse for making this project a reality.

To my family: wife, Regina, daughter, Tashina, and son, Ian. Thank you for allowing me to follow my passion of helping preserve the stories of the brave men and women who served our country during time of war.

# ***Notes***

## **Chapter One**

George Weidensall, correspondence on May 19 and 24, 2008.

## **Chapter Two**

Raymond Fish, correspondence on August 19, 2008.

## **Chapter Three**

Dick Franklin, correspondence during July 2004.

## **Chapter Four**

Jospeh Marlett, correspondence between October 18, 2008 and February 23, 2009.

## **Chapter Five**

Harold Selley, correspondence on October 13, 2005.

Korean War Educator.com. Used with permission from Harold Selley and Lynette Brown.

## **Chapter Six**

George Porter, correspondence on September 6, 2004.

## **Chapter Seven**

1. Robert Bouterse memoir, "*Tour of Duty*." Used with his permission.

## **Chapter Eight**

Fred Connolly, phone interview on July 31, 2010.

## **Chapter Nine**

Richard Johannes, correspondence between June 30 and September 9, 2008.

## **Chapter Ten**

1. Jack M. Anderson, *Warrior...By Choice...By Chance* (Mukilteo, Washington, WinePress Publishing, 1997) pp. 291-292

2. Ibid, p. 301

3. Ibid, p. 305

4. Ibid, p. 314

5. Ibid, p. 319

6. Ibid, pp. 342-343

7. Ibid, p. 347

8. Ibid, p. 347

Jack Anderson, correspondence between August 2005 and January 2006.

## **Chapter Eleven**

Dillon Staas, correspondence February 25 – November 12, 2008.

## **Chapter Twelve**

Lloyd Paul Summers, correspondence during September 2008.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

Robert “BJ” Johnson, correspondence during September 2008.

## **Chapter Fourteen**

Carroll Everist, correspondence during May 2008.

### **Chapter Fifteen**

Joseph Lloyd Wosser, Jr., correspondence with his daughter, Nancy Becker during August 2008.

### **Chapter Sixteen**

Eric Hanney, phone interview on June 23, 2008.

### **Chapter Seventeen**

Tom Enos, correspondence on June 23, 2008.

### **Chapter Eighteen**

Forrest O'Neal, phone interview on July 31, 2008.

### **Chapter Nineteen**

Victor Shepherd, correspondence on August 12, 2008.

### **Chapter Twenty**

Robert Harbula, correspondence from July to August 2008.

### **Chapter Twenty-One**

1. Jack Chapman's memoir, *"If Captured."* Used with his permission.

### **Chapter Twenty-Two**

Rex Raymond, correspondence on August 14, 2008.

### **Chapter Twenty-Three**

Robert Grass, interviewed at his home on January 19, 2010.

### **Chapter Twenty-Four**

Brooks Outland, correspondence during October 2008.

### **Chapter Twenty-Five**

1. Janice Feagin Brittons' memoir, "*Magic of the Military*." Used with her permission.

### **Chapter Twenty-Six**

Charles Toole, correspondence during July 2004.

### **Chapter Twenty-Seven**

Douglas Voss, correspondence during September 2008.

### **Chapter Twenty-Eight**

Mario Faiella, correspondence during September 2008.

### **Chapter Twenty-Nine**

1. From a collection of unpublished stories titled, "*Korea, Korea*," by Donald Nicol. Used with Raymond Cesaretti's and Donald Nicol's permission.

### **Chapter Thirty**

Floyd Combs, correspondence during November 2008.

### **Chapter Thirty-One**

1. Donald Thomas' memoir, "*Atwater's Boy Soldier*." Used with his permission.

## **Chapter Thirty-Two**

John Rick Kennedy, correspondence from January to May 2008.

## **Chapter Thirty-Three**

Byron Dickerson, phone interview on September 6, 2008.

## **Chapter Thirty-Four**

Donald Barton, correspondence from July 2008 to April 2009.

## **Chapter Thirty-Five**

1. Newton Duke, phone interview on August 21, 2010.
2. Denzil Edge, interview on June 27, 2010.
3. Mary Smith, interview on October 4, 2009.

Letters of Ernest Edge were provided by the Edge Family.

## **Chapter Thirty-Six**

John Ebnet, correspondence during April 2004.

## **Chapter Thirty-Seven**

Delbert Rice, listening to his stories since childhood.

## **Chapter Thirty-Eight**

Fred Redmon, correspondence during August 2008.

## **Chapter Thirty-Nine**

William McCraney, correspondence during January 2008

## **Chapter Forty**

Richard Esser, correspondence during October 2008.

### **Chapter Forty-One**

Howard Camp, correspondence during March 2008.

### **Chapter Forty-Two**

Rexford Glass, correspondence between August and September 2004.

### **Chapter Forty-Three**

Raymond Reilley, correspondence during May 2004.

### **Chapter Forty-Four**

David Lopez, correspondence during January 2008.

### **Chapter Forty-Five**

Charles Bracey, correspondence during May 2004.

### **Chapter Forty-Six**

Albert Field, correspondence during October 2008.

### **Chapter Forty-Seven**

Kenneth Flynn, correspondence during June 2004.

### **Chapter Forty-Eight**

Donald Degood, correspondence during May 2008.

### **Chapter Forty-Nine**

Otto White, correspondence between May and August 2008.

## **Chapter Fifty**

Alfred Eckhart, correspondence during September 2004.

## **Chapter Fifty-One**

George DeSha, phone interview on June 10, 2008.

## **Chapter Fifty-Two**

Morton Wood, Jr., correspondence during October 2008.

## **Chapter Fifty-Three**

Anthony Gurule', correspondence during January 2008.

## **Chapter Fifty-Four**

Marvin Totland, correspondence during August 2004.

## **Chapter Fifty-Five**

David Hughes, phone interview on June 22, 2004.

## **Chapter Fifty-Six**

Stanley Grogan, correspondence during August 2008.

## **Chapter Fifty-Seven**

Calvin Harwick, correspondence during January 2008.

## **Chapter Fifty-Eight**

Melbourne Leroy Rogers, correspondence between May and September 2004.

## **Chapter Fifty-Nine**

Mark Pease, correspondence during April 2008.

## **Chapter Sixty**

1. From a collection of unpublished stories titled, "*Korea, Korea*," by Donald Nicol. Used with Paul Elkins' and Donald Nicol's permission.

## **Chapter Sixty-One**

Dr. William Latham, correspondence during July 2008.

## **Chapter Sixty-Two**

Roger Lueckenhoff, correspondence during September 2008.

## **Chapter Sixty-Three**

Dick Thune, correspondence between July and September 2009.

## **Chapter Sixty-Four**

Kenneth Whitehouse, phone interview on February 19, 2010.

## **Chapter Sixty-Five**

John Delaney, correspondence during February 2009.

## **Chapter Sixty-Six**

Robert Bickmeyer, correspondence during November 2008.

## **Chapter Sixty-Seven**

Peter Beauchamp, correspondence during September 2008.

## **Chapter Sixty-Eight**

Ronald Hale, correspondence during October 2008.

## **Chapter Sixty-Nine**

1. From a collection of unpublished stories titled, “*Korea, Korea*,” by Donald Nicol. Used with Charles Klenklen’s and Donald Nicol’s permission.

## **Chapter Seventy**

Dr. John Laura, correspondence during February 2008.

## **Chapter Seventy-One**

Chuck Gibbs, correspondence during

## **Chapter Seventy-Two**

1. Ophsa.org. Used with his permission.

## **Chapter Seventy-Three**

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## **Chapter Seventy-Five**

1. From a collection of unpublished stories title, “*Korea, Korea,*” by Donald Nicol. Used with Gordon Southern’s and Donald Nicol’s permission.

### **Chapter Seventy-Six**

Donald Albert, correspondence during August 2008.

### **Chapter Seventy-Seven**

Clyde Corsaro, phone interview on August 10, 2008.

### **Chapter Seventy-Eight**

Wayne Pelkey, correspondence during August 2008.

### **Chapter Seventy-Nine**

Robert Ericson, correspondence during January 2008.

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[2] Taken from Robert Bouterse’s memoirs; “*Tour of Duty*.” Used with permission from Robert Bouterse.

[3] Taken from Jack Chapman’s unpublished memoirs “*If Captured*.” Used with permission from Jack Chapman.

[4] Taken from Janice Feagin Britton’s unpublished memoirs, “*The Magic of the Military: An Army Air Force Nurse in the Orient*.” Used with permission from Janice Feagin Britton.

- [5] Taken from a collection of stories titled, "*Korea, Korea*" by Donald "Hank" Nicol. Used with permission from Raymond Cesaretti and Donald "Hank" Nicol.
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